

CAFÉ SCIENTIFIQUE SILICON VALLEY HEADS INTO ITS FIFTH YEAR

Thousands Have Participated in a Wide Range of Scientific Discussions Since the Bay Area's First Café Scientifique in 2004

MENLO PARK, CA (April 2008) – At the time that Roger Whiting and Nancy Peterson founded Café Scientifique Silicon Valley in 2004, science cafés were nearly unheard of in the U.S. For its first event, Café Scientifique invited Stanford physicist and Nobel Laureate Doug Osheroff to discuss "The Columbia Accident Investigation and the Future of Human Space Flight." Talking with about 60 people packed into a small Palo Alto café, Prof. Osheroff expressed his concern about manned space exploration, then ended the discussion by reciting "Reincarnation," a cowboy poem by Wallace McRae. That was quite a launch for Silicon Valley's first science café.

Since then, thousands of people from around the Bay Area have participated, in the Café's informal setting, to discuss and debate a diversity of hot topics such as stem cells, global warming, space and ocean exploration, and genetically engineered foods. From junior high school students to senior citizens, from science teachers to entrepreneurs, there is a near-insatiable appetite for the Café fare. Some people attend regularly, driven by a general curiosity, while others join in when the topic is of keen personal or professional interest. The events are open to any and all, with no admission charge.

It was Dr. Whiting's idea to import the concept of science cafes from the United Kingdom to Silicon Valley. The world's first Café Scientifique was held in 1998 in England and spawned a grassroots movement that has taken hold in hundreds of cities on every continent around the globe. The informal events are held in a variety of venues worldwide including bars, theaters, churches and other community gathering places. Dr. Whiting discovered a Café in Edinburgh, Scotland, and was immediately hooked.

"The idea of discussing science in a relaxed café environment with members of the general public struck me as something that would fit perfectly with the inquiring minds of Silicon Valley," said Dr. Whiting.

“Our motives are really quite simple,” said Nancy Peterson, a communications consultant from Palo Alto. “We want to help the public gain access to the people behind the science, and at the same time, keep science in the forefront of public awareness. We believe it is in everyone’s best interest for scientists and non-scientists to engage in open dialogue.”

Scientists are eager to engage with the Café Scientifique crowd and willingly volunteer their time to lead discussions. Attendance at the monthly gatherings in Silicon Valley has risen steadily from about 50 to well over 250 participants, requiring several moves to larger quarters. The largest venue is now provided by SRI International at its headquarters in Menlo Park.

Information about upcoming speakers is available on the Café Scientifique Silicon Valley website (www.cafescisv.org) and in local community calendars. Café Scientifique subscribers frequently pass information through their social networks. “The audience at Café Scientifique has been active in spreading our message to friends, family and colleagues with the result that at every event, 50 percent of the audience is new,” said Dr. Whiting.

ROXRO PHARMA, Inc., where Dr. Whiting is president and chief scientific officer, has been a sponsor of Café Scientifique from the beginning. "ROXRO has been delighted with the public response to Café Scientifique and thus we are happy to announce that we will continue to support this innovative forum that brings cutting-edge science on topical subjects to members of our community," said Whiting. "Café Scientifique has had remarkable success since we began the first one on the West Coast in 2004," he said.

When Dr. Whiting approached long-time friend Walter Moos with a plea for help finding space, Dr. Moos and his SRI colleagues saw a great opportunity for SRI International to welcome the community and support the discussion of important scientific topics. “We are pleased to play a role in this important venue for sharing scientific ideas and opinions,” said Moos, vice president of SRI International’s Biosciences Division.

Café Scientifique Silicon Valley has the support of an Advisory Board whose members reach out to the worlds of academics and business to find topics and speakers. The cafe also receives frequent speaker proposals submitted through its web page.

All Café Scientifique events are free and open to the public. Events are held in SRI's International Building at 333 Ravenswood Ave., Menlo Park, on the second Tuesday of most months. For more information on Cafe Scientifique Silicon Valley activities, go to www.cafescisv.org.

ABOUT ROXRO PHARMACEUTICALS

ROXRO PHARMA, Inc., of Menlo Park, is a privately owned specialty pharmaceutical company focused on the treatment of pain. Founded in 1999, Roxro in-licenses promising drug candidates for rapid development in acute pain conditions. The company's highly experienced management team engages a global network of experts to conduct pre-clinical and clinical studies and to manufacture drug products. This year Roxro plans to submit an application to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration seeking approval to market its lead compound, ROX-888, for the treatment of moderate-to-severe post-operative pain. For more information on Roxro, go to www.roxropharma.com.

ABOUT SRI INTERNATIONAL

Silicon Valley-based SRI International (www.sri.com) is one of the world's leading research and technology development organizations. Founded as Stanford Research Institute in 1946, SRI has been meeting the strategic needs of clients for 60 years. The nonprofit research institute performs client-sponsored research and development for government agencies, commercial businesses and private foundations. In addition to conducting contract R&D, SRI licenses its technologies, forms strategic partnerships and creates spin-off companies.

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