



MOVERS

SPEAK UP. At 22, Tom Holder is already a veteran of a U.K. student-led campaign to counter demonstrations and vandalism by animal-rights activists. Now he's hoping to apply lessons learned from those battles to help scientists speak out about the benefits of animal research in the United States, where attacks by animal-rights extremists have been on the rise (*Science*, 21 December 2007, p. 1856).

"When a lot of people stand up together, the attacks go right down," says Holder, who founded the nonprofit group Speaking of Research (speakingofresearch.org) in March.

It's a message U.S. audiences need to hear, says the recent University of Oxford philosophy graduate, citing the presence of an armed police officer outside the hall at one recent university speech he gave. "It really sent the wrong message," Holder says. "I'm out there saying you're not going to get attacked for speaking up about this." The organization is also working with public schools to counter information from groups such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

Mary Hanley, executive vice president of the National Association for Biomedical Research in Washington, D.C., applauds Holder's efforts. "I wish there was an army of him," she says.

IN THE NEWS

CELESTIAL SYMPHONY. Composer Nolan Gasser admits he was "a little bit intimidated" when he was asked to write a musical accompaniment for last month's launch of the Gamma-ray Large Area Space Telescope (GLAST) (*Science*, 23 May, p. 1008). But his 9-minute *GLAST Prelude* for brass quintet delighted project scientists at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland. The piece features notes timed to depict the electromagnetic spectrum and a crescendo of trombones and trumpets symbolizing the mission's energetic target of gamma ray bursts.



What he learned while researching the origins of supernovae and black holes has prepared him for his next commission: a 40-minute composition, with spoken and video segments, that will detail the history of the universe.

"The more we can bring an appreciation of science to the public, the better," says physics philanthropist Pierre Schwob, founder of classicalarchives.com and a co-writer of the work's libretto. Gasser's *Cosmic Reflection* will be performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C., in September 2009.

IN THE FIELD

BATTING BUGS. Katharina Dittmar de la Cruz spent half of her evenings last month atop farmhouses and barns trying to figure out what's killing hundreds of thousands of bats in the northeastern United States. The evolutionary biologist at the University of Buffalo in New York state doesn't have an answer yet, but she's convinced that the flying mammals get a bum rap.

De la Cruz is trying to track down the cause of white-nose syndrome, a mysterious disease discovered last year that weakens a bat's immune system. She suspects that bat flies and other blood-sucking parasites may be carriers of the disease, and she plans to study their DNA to better understand how that transmission might occur. But the only way that she and undergraduate Doug Brummell could obtain enough samples was to perch on rooftops and pluck the insects off their hosts.



An avid caver with a fascination for organisms that lurk in dark corners, de la Cruz says bats' reputation as spooky beasts is misplaced. "I have been swarmed a few times, but they are more scared of me than I am of them."

Data Point >>

RAISING AWARENESS. Women now make up 33% of the U.S. science and engineering workforce, but the community has been slow to recognize their accomplishments. The RAISE project (www.raiseproject.org), an initiative to increase awareness of women's achievements in science, has analyzed 1011 award programs that have honored 20,373 people since 1981. Only 17% of the winners are women. And one-third of those were awarded by programs reserved for women. Even worse, women make up fewer than 1% of the honorees for 32% of the awards. The project is sponsored by the Society for Women's Health Research.

