



**NOVA's NEW WEB-ONLY SERIES *THE SECRET LIFE OF SCIENTISTS* REVEALS PLAYFUL SIDE OF TOP MINDS—MEET A POLE-VAULTING ENGINEER, ROCK 'N' ROLL PHYSICIST, CULINARY "LEECH MAN," JUGGLING CLIMATOLOGIST, AND OTHERS**

**Launches September 2009  
[www.pbs.org/nova/secretlife](http://www.pbs.org/nova/secretlife)**

BOSTON, MA—This September, NOVA will launch a brand-new web-only series, *The Secret Life of Scientists*—[www.pbs.org/nova/secretlife](http://www.pbs.org/nova/secretlife)—highlighting two science and engineering stars every month. In a selection of three to six short, punchy films, each person describes his or her passions both within and outside of science. The site will also include opportunities to interact directly with the scientists through “questions & answers,” sharing stories, and bonus video that digs deep into each scientist’s work and life to reveal more about who these thinkers are as people.

Funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, *The Secret Life of Scientists* will highlight a total of 32 scientists and engineers over the next two years. Mark Siddall will be the first scientist featured on the site. A biologist who’s often off in exotic locations studying leeches, Siddall is also a culinary adventurer whose passion outside of science is cooking, and whether he’s in the swamps of Tanzania or on the coast of New Brunswick, he seeks out unique, native ingredients such as Irish moss, a red seaweed, to flavor his dishes. And yes, he’s tried leeches, too.

*The Secret Life of Scientists* is a spin-off from the successful on-air scientist profiles on NOVA’s summer science series NOVA scienceNOW on PBS and the popular “Ask the Expert” web feature that complements the broadcast. “We’ve gotten great feedback from viewers about the scientists we profile on television, so we’re thrilled to continue to share the personal and professional lives of scientists on the web,” said Senior Executive Producer of NOVA and NOVA scienceNOW Paula S. Apsell. “The scientists and engineers featured in the web-only series are incredibly passionate people, doing extremely important work, and their enthusiasm extends beyond the lab, into their personal lives and hobbies. We hope people of all ages connect with science on a new level and get inspired and excited by seeing scientists in a way they’ve never seen them before.”

For Siddall, science and cooking are both about the joy of discovery. “Cooking and preparing food comes from deep inside, and for me it’s a creative outlet,” he remarks. In addition to this culinary “leech man,” the online series will highlight Gavin Schmidt, a climate scientist who’s an avid juggler; engineer Nate Ball, who’s not only host of *Design Squad* on PBS but also a

*more*

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champion pole-vaulter and enjoys free running, an extreme form of acrobatics; and physicist Joe DeGeorge, who plays in a cult band called "Harry and the Potters."

"We are delighted to support NOVA in this innovative effort to give the public an inside look at the lives of scientists and engineers through the world wide web," said Doron Weber, Vice President for Programs for The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. "We hope this series will reveal the biggest secret of all, that science and technology is a fundamentally human enterprise conducted by men and women who are just as passionate, funny, talented, ambitious, flawed and complex as other human beings."

Each scientist and engineer highlighted on *The Secret Life of Scientists* speaks directly to the camera in the series' selection of short films. These include "30-second science," in which the experts explain what they do in half a minute or less, and "10 rapid-fire questions," in which they share why they love what they do, how their science and secret passion serve each other, the path they took in their career, and more.

"Today, we know every intimate detail about actors and pop stars," says the web series' producer, Joshua Seftel. "The scientists in this series are inspiring people who are changing our world. We should know about them, too!"

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