ScienceWriters™

National Association of Science Writers, Inc.

Fall 2009

JOB MARKET
TRANSITIONS
IN MIDCAREER

NASW CAREER DEVELOPMENT
GRANTS

SCIENCE
CLICHÉS
TO BANISH

POLICIES ON MEDIA
ACCESS
IMPROVING

GEOGRAPHIC
SPREAD
OF SCIENCE WRITERS

FINDING
FREE
TAX ADVICE

ScienceWriters™
EST. 1952

Fall 2009 ■ Vol. 58, No. 4

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Deadlines
Next Issue: Winter....December 1, 2009
Spring.....March 1, 2010
Summer .....June 1, 2010
Fall .....September 1, 2010

On The Cover
Death Valley, Calif. © Ingram Publishing/SuperStock. Communication wires © Photo Alto/SuperStock.

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EST. 1934

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The Council for the Advancement of Science Writing provides financial support to NASW for the production of *ScienceWriters*.

ScienceWriters is printed in the U.S.A. on recycled paper.

From The Editor

Several months ago, Carol Morton approached me with a story idea for ScienceWriters. *Amidst all the doom and gloom about journalism, she had been hearing about some interesting new jobs and careers our intrepid colleagues have found for themselves; some traditional and some not so traditional. Her article (starting on page 2) paints an encouraging picture of how a number of science writers have applied valuable investigate and communication skills in new ways and perhaps are extending the professional definition of our community.*

Other science writers are retooling and reinventing themselves with the help of NASW career development awards. Scan the list opposite this page and you may come up with ideas for your own career development proposal when the next round of NASW grants is offered.

In this issue we also celebrate this year's winners of the NASW Science in Society award CASW Victor Cohn Prize for Excellence in Medical Science Reporting and the impact that outstanding science journalism continues to have placing a spotlight on societal issues and advancing solutions.

Lynne Friedmann

In This Issue

FRIEDMANN PHOTO COURTESY OF KEN JACQUES; CAREER PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE KNIGHT DIGITAL MEDIA CENTER, UC BERKELEY

Many writers are returning to the classroom to retrain and retool for jobs in the new economy.

Career Development Grants Awarded

NASW is pleased to announce 16 recipients of NASW's first Career Development Grants, developed to support education, training, or other activities that help established science writers continue or advance their careers in today's rapidly changing media environment. The grants offer reimbursement of up to $2,500 for proposed activities. The program is supported by funds that NASW receives as part of the Authors Coalition of America, which distributes royalties on U.S. copyrights collected overseas.

Fifty-one applicants submitted requests that far exceeded the initial $25,000 budget. In choosing among many worthy and varied proposals, the selection committee was guided both by individual proposals' quality and by the program's purpose of providing opportunities for established science writers to adapt, redirect, or expand their careers in very challenging times. Successful proposals generally fell in the categories of training, equipment, and—for freelance and staff writers alike—travel that would produce opportunities to gain new clients, broaden professional networks or enhance skills. ■

New media and multimedia were top choices in career development proposals.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Catherine Clabby, editor and writer at *American Scientist*, $1,200 for multimedia bootcamp attendance

Erin Cline Davis, science writer 23andMe, $413 for Poynter's NewsU multimedia classes

Dan Ferber, freelance science writer, $2,100 for Poynter Institute class on online storytelling

Jane Gardner, freelance science writer, $1,000 for a grant writing class

Erica Gies, freelance writer and editor, $2,500 for radio assignment story reporting in Guyana

Karen Heyman, freelance writer and editor, $1,500 for sequence of courses to increase skills in mathematics

Barbara Kennedy, director of media relations and public information, Penn State, $2,500 for travel to Global Forum for Health Research meeting in Cuba

Ken Kostel, freelance science writer, $1,331 for digital audio and video equipment

Nancy Lamontagne, freelance science writer, $2,450 for meeting attendance and multimedia bootcamp

Barbara Moran, freelance science journalist, $2,045 for a Rockport workshop class on web design and sound recording

Karen Rafinski, freelance journalist, $213 for online multimedia courses

Tinker Ready, writer and instructor at Northeastern and Boston University, $2,024 for digital audio equipment

Bill Retherford, writer and producer, $657 for continuing education class on Florida's geological landscape and environment

Linda Roach, freelance science writer, $1,659 for community college and Poynter Institute webinars for multimedia training

Bob Roehr, freelance science writer, $1,000 for travel to the National HIV Prevention Conference

David Taylor, freelance science writer, $2,109 for digital film editing training and travel

From the newsroom to the classroom. Nancy Shute's freelance career includes training journalists in the use of new social media.

Matt Crenson at a "spit party" for the genomic-testing company 23andMe. Bitter-taste detection is one of the traits tested.

Writing venues may change, but the essential task hasn't. Mike Lemonick in the Arctic on behalf of Climate Central and on location in Antarctica for *TIME*.

Navigating the Job Market *in Mid-Career*

BY CAROL CRUZAN MORTON

Carey Goldberg knew the *Boston Globe* was in a full-blown financial crisis. Still, she was shocked when told in March that she had been laid off along with the rest of the *Globe*'s part-timers. Effective immediately. No severance pay. Please schedule a time with security to collect your things.

"I had foolishly thought that my resume would protect me," Goldberg said. The former *New York Times* Boston bureau chief had joined the *Globe* staff six years ago to write about science on a part-time basis while her children were young.

In fact, she had been on the playground with her kids when a phone call brought the devastating news. She recounted her experience for Boston public radio station WBUR under the headline "*Globe* Journalist: 'It Wasn't You' Is No Consolation."

Now Goldberg faces a question shared by many science writers whose skills suddenly feel superannuated as traditional journalism and communications jobs seem to going the way of the dinosaurs that they still want to be write about.

"The central question for everyone is: Where is the future?" Goldberg said. "I've got another 20 years of a career. Where should I invest it?"

Goldberg has lots of company in grappling with these soul-searching questions. Whether they leaped or were pushed, health and science writers are figuring out how to leverage their storytelling, reporting, and strategic communications skills in a variety of ways to pay the mortgage and to find job satisfaction. Their personal stories offer a chronicle of the changing times and serve as models of hope for others trying to figure out what to do next.

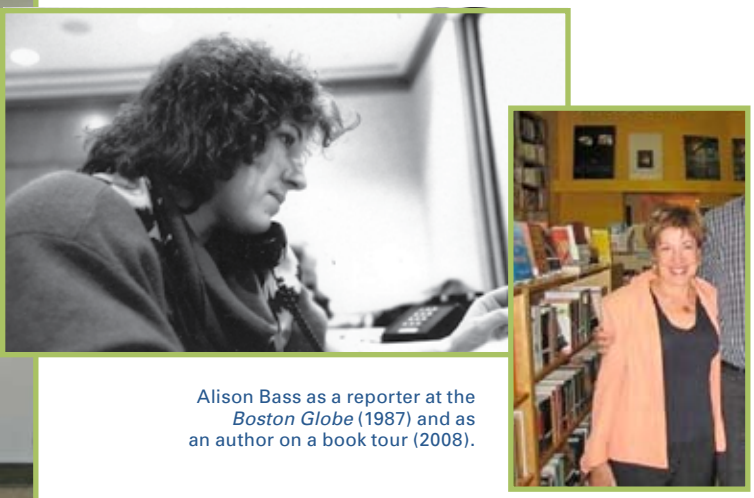
CHANGING COURSE IN MID-CAREER

Mid-career transitions are not new for science writers. For example, journalism fellowship programs have long been populated by restless writers looking for new professional opportunities. But widespread financial upheavals in the media industry and the dire state of the overall economy have transformed the emotional landscape of career moves.

"Now, you can't leave your chair, or your job will be in danger," said Phil Hilts, director of the MIT Knight Science Journalism Fellowship in Cambridge, Mass. In recent years, program demographics have changed from secure employees of major media organizations to apprehensive refugees of buyouts and layoffs—and freelances. Hilts responsibilities now includes retrofitting reporters with new media skills, such as creating audio podcasts or producing videos for the web.

CAROL CRUZAN MORTON IS A FREELANCE JOURNALIST AND SCIENCE WRITER AT HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL. SHE RECALLS EARLY CAREER ADVICE FROM AN OREGON JOURNALIST/NURSE WHO WROTE FOR THE *NEW YORKER*: DON'T TRY TO MAKE A LIVING AS A WRITER.

SHUTE PHOTO COURTESY OF FAITH HAYDEN; LEMONICK PHOTOS COURTESY OF MIKE LEMONICK; 23ANDME.COM PHOTO COURTESY OF MATTHEW CRENSON



Alison Bass as a reporter at the *Boston Globe* (1987) and as an author on a book tour (2008).

"Never has there been such a sheer volume of highly talented people pursuing such a limited number of options," said Sabin Russell, who is setting up a freelance office and looking for work after 22 years with the *San Francisco Chronicle*. In March, during his MIT Knight fellowship, Russell opted for a buyout package to preserve his newspaper pension.

One popular next step for science journalists in transition is teaching journalism. "Paradoxically, at a time when journalism is in so much turmoil, many students want to be journalists," said Alison Bass, who teaches at Mount Holyoke College and Brandeis University in Massachusetts. Bass abandoned the *Globe* in 2000 to become executive editor of *CIO Magazine*. She's also produced a book, *Side Effects: A Prosecutor, a Whistleblower, and a Bestselling Antidepressant on Trial*, which won a NASW Science in Society Journalism award (see page 4).

In another twist on teaching, *Sky & Telescope* editor Rick Fienberg left the magazine, after 22 years, and taught astronomy at Phillips Academy in Andover, Mass., as a visiting scientist. "I grew tired of the monthly grind and the incessant bad news about the publishing business," he wrote in an e-mail. "I'm not sure what I'll be doing next, but after two decades of relative stability, a little uncertainty isn't so terrible." Or so he tells himself.

JOBS BEYOND JOURNALISM

Mike Lemonick considers himself "seriously unqualified to do anything else" but science journalism. In 2007, he left *TIME* magazine after 20 years, taking what he estimated might be the last good severance package. He dived into teaching and writing. In the process he finished a book.

Just as he was assessing himself as unsuited to the uncertainties of income from book contracts and freelance articles, Lemonick got wind of Climate Central, a new nonprofit science and media organization created to provide clear and objective information about climate change to the public. Once again, Lemonick has a full-time job with benefits as a part of a staff that produces stories for mainstream media, such as *Newsweek*, *TIME*, PBS's The NewsHour, and *Scientific American*. The nonprofit relies on grants and foundation money, but "it's more comfortable being part of an organization that's asking for money than being an individual who is selling himself."

Nancy Shute, on the other hand, relishes her return to freelancing, which she did for 13 years before running the science section at *U.S. News & World Report*. "It's not for everybody," she said. The senior writer for health and medicine took a buyout in April, but she still blogs and writes features for the print monthly on contract. Enthusiastic about the way in which new media can empower writers, she trains journalists in how to use Twitter and other social networking tools. And she teaches science writing and multimedia for Johns Hopkins University's advanced academic program.

Don't expect an easy transition, cautions Matt Crenson. He left the *Associated Press* two years ago because "things were changing rapidly, and people were trying to figure out how to make money," he said. That aspect seems exactly the same in his new job as the content manager for 23andMe, a personal genomic-testing startup.

For the most part, Crenson feels far removed the days of being one of the "*New Yorker* writers of the *AP*," as the long-form colleagues on the national desk once styled themselves when times were good, "I really miss (reporting), but I did the right thing," said Crenson, who doesn't see a future in journalism.

Nils Bruzelius agrees. The former science editor is on his second buyout, first from the *Boston Globe* in 2001 and this year from

JOB MARKET continued on page 28

VINTAGE BASS PHOTO COURTESY OF THE *BOSTON GLOBE*; BASS BOOK STORE PHOTO COURTESY OF JUDI ROTH


Alison Bass


Jason Felch


Maura Dolan


Michael J. Berens


Ken Armstrong


Pamela Ronald

Science in Society Journalism Award Winners Announced

Winning entries explore the pharmaceutical industry, antibiotic resistant germs, the shortcomings of DNA evidence, and why some organic farmers are embracing genetic engineering.

The winners of the 2009 Science in Society Journalism Awards, sponsored by NASW, are: **Alison Bass** for her book *Side Effects: A Prosecutor, a Whistleblower, and a Bestselling Antidepressant on Trial* (Algonquin Books), **Jason Felch** and **Maura Dolan** for their *Los Angeles Times* series "Genes as Evidence," **Michael J. Berens** and **Ken Armstrong** for their *Seattle Times* series "Culture of Resistance," and **Pamela Ronald** for her commentary "The New Organic," which appeared on boston.com, the website of the *Boston Globe*.

Each of the four award categories carries with it a cash prize of $2,500 that will be presented at a banquet on Oct. 18 during NASW's ScienceWriters 2009 meeting and workshop, in Austin, Texas.

In addition, the judges also awarded honorable mentions to Neil Shubin for his book *Your Inner Fish: A Journey into the 3.5-Billion-Year History of the Human Body* (Tyndale); Jeff Donn, Martha Mendoza, and Justin Prichard for their *Associated Press* series "Pharma Water"; and David Goldston for his commentary "The Scientist Delusion," which appeared in *Nature*.

In *Side Effects*, Alison Bass, an investigative journalist who has covered medicine, science, and technology for the *Boston Globe* and other publications, tells the story of how pharma giant GlaxoSmithKline systematically misled physicians and consumers about the safety and efficacy of Paxil, a popular antidepressant. "It's a very complicated issue, and the author conveyed this like a mystery story," said one of the judges, noting that "her investigations led to changes in policy in many areas of public health, not only nationally but internationally."

(Alison Bass') investigations led to changes in policy in many areas of public health…

Published between May and December 2008, the five-part series "DNA: Genes as Evidence" by *Los Angeles Times* reporters Jason Felch and Maura Dolan revealed serious shortcomings in DNA-based forensic evidence. For example, they found that the FBI as well as crime labs across the country routinely exaggerate the odds against a coincidental match in "cold hit" cases. "Thanks to entertainment shows like CSI, people think of DNA evidence as absolutely precise and incontrovertible," said one of the judges. "What this series tries to tackle is how you introduce the concept of uncertainty into this type of evidence."

Published in the *Seattle Times* in November 2008, the three-part series "Culture of Resistance" by reporters Michael J. Berens and Ken Armstrong provided the first comprehensive accounting of the spread of a drug-resistant germ called MRSA in hospitals in Washington State. In the face of stonewalling by sources, Berens and Armstrong used confidential documents and sophisticated analyses of multiple databases to determine that the number of patients treated for MRSA in Washington rose from 141 to 4,723 in just 10 years, resulting in 672 deaths that had been hidden from the public. The series resulted in new reporting requirements for hospitals, legislative efforts to improve protections for medical consumers, and expanded screening procedures at two large medical centers. "Although we're awarding for local coverage, I think this piece has also had a rather profound national impact as well," said one of the judges.

In "The New Organic," which was published online by the *Boston Globe* on March 16, 2008, Pamela Ronald argues that resistance to genetic engineering by proponents of organic farming is driven more by technological anxiety than by science. Ronald, a professor of plant pathology at UC Davis and married to an organic farmer, argues that "this resistance hurts farmers, consumers, and the planet. Without the use of genetically engineered seed, the beneficial effects of organic farming…will likely remain small." The judges praised her "well structured arguments" that have the potential to "change the framework of the debate."

NASW established the Science in Society awards to provide recognition—without subsidy from any professional or commercial interest—for investigative or interpretive reporting about the sciences and their impact for good and bad. The awards are intended to encourage critical, probing work that would not receive an award from an interest group. Beginning with the first award in 1972, NASW has highlighted innovative reporting that goes well beyond the research findings and considers the associated ethical problems and social effects. The awards are judged by accomplished peers. NASW currently awards prizes in four categories: books, science reporting, science reporting with a local or regional focus, and commentary or opinion.

The final judging committee consisted of Dr. Esther Sternberg,

WINNERS continued on page 29

BASS PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHELLE MCDONALD; RONALD PHOTO COURTESY OF DEBBIE ALDRIDGE, UC DAVIS; TANZANIA PHOTO COURTESY OF BEATRICE DE GEA; GRADY COURTESY OF FRED CONRAD

Denise Grady of *NY Times* Wins Victor Cohn Prize

Denise Grady, a *New York Times* science reporter, has been selected to receive the 2009 Victor Cohn Prize for Excellence in Medical Science Reporting in recognition of the unusual breadth and depth of her coverage of a wide range of health issues, both domestic and international.

Grady's initiative led her to Tanzania to report on the devastating toll of pregnancy and childbirth in the developing world, to Angola to provide a courageous and penetrating look at efforts to fight an outbreak of the deadly Marburg virus, and to Sri Lanka to investigate the public health challenges that followed the 2004 tsunami. Her special skills were also evident in stories dealing with the downside of weight-loss surgery, the importance of virtual autopsies, the life-altering consequences of injuries suffered by Iraq veterans, and first-person commentaries in her *Science Times* column, "Second Opinion."

Denise Grady at an orphanage in Tanzania

The Cohn Prize judges were struck by Grady's graceful and vivid writing, the visceral impact of her storytelling, and her uncanny ability to seize on and capture acutely revealing details that imbue her reporting with uncommon resonance and humanity, whether in breaking news, long features, or analysis. In his nominating letter, David Corcoran, assistant science news editor of the *New York Times* called attention to her "talent for spotting a story, her relentlessness in pursuing it (literally, sometimes to the ends of the earth)…and the explanatory firepower she brings to medical developments that cry out for clarity and context."

Denise Grady

The Cohn Prize, for a body of work published or broadcast within the last five years, was established by the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing (CASW).

Grady will receive a check for $3,000 and a certificate in Austin, Texas, on October 18 at an awards dinner held as part of ScienceWriters 2009, which includes the National Association of Science Writers' annual meeting and professional training workshops and CASW's 47th annual New Horizons in Science briefing for journalists at the University of Texas at Austin.

Grady joined the science news department of the *Times* as a reporter in 1988 and has also worked as a health editor there. For several years prior to that she contributed to the newspaper as a freelancer. Grady has written more than 500 articles for the *Times*, and has edited two *Times* books (on women's health and alternative medicine) and is the author of *Deadly Invaders*, a book about emerging diseases that was published in 2006. From 1988 until 1998, she was a freelance writer for a host of other publications, including *Science*, *Discover*, *Scientific American*, *TIME*, *Vogue*, *Reader's Digest*, and *Self*. She also served as a staff writer covering medicine for *TIME* and *Discover*, an associate editor for *The Sciences* magazine, and as an assistant editor at the *New England Journal of Medicine* and at the journal *Physics Today*. A native of New York City, Grady received a B. S. degree in biology from the State University of New York in Stony Brook and an M.S. in English from the University of New Hampshire.

> …relentlessness in pursuing (a story)… sometimes to the ends of the earth…

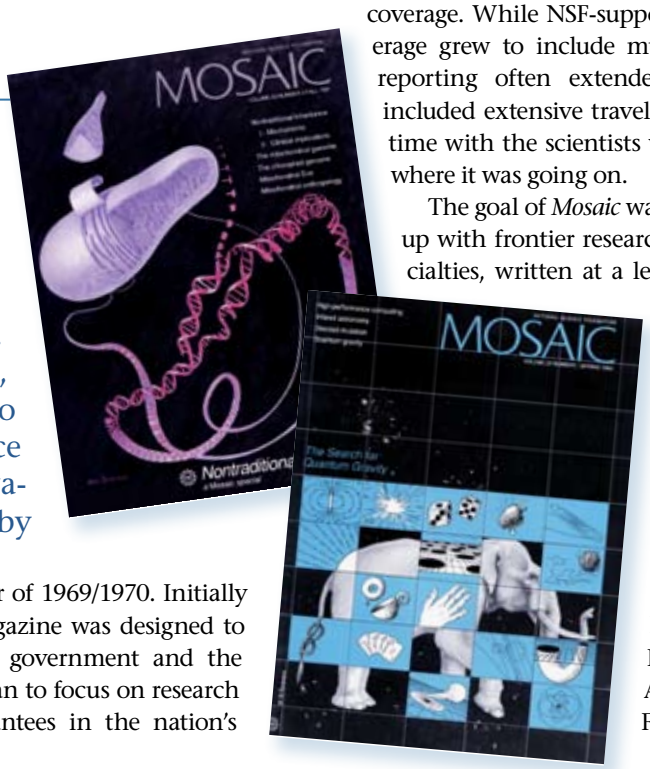
This year's entries were judged by Mariette DiChristina, president of NASW and acting editor in chief of *Scientific American*; Robert Lee Hotz, *Wall Street Journal* science columnist; CASW president Cristine Russell, a freelance writer and senior fellow at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government; and Ben Patrusky, CASW's executive director.

This marks the tenth presentation of the Cohn Prize. The inaugural award was shared by Laurie Garrett of *Newsday* and Lawrence K. Altman of the *New York Times*. Subsequent recipients were Jon Palfreman, a public television documentary filmmaker; Daniel Q. Haney, former medical editor of *The Associated Press*; Shannon Brownlee, a widely published magazine and newspaper freelance journalist; Michelle Trudeau of National Public Radio; Rick Weiss of the *Washington Post*; Jerome Groopman of *The New Yorker*; Geeta Anand of the *Wall Street Journal*; and Joe Palca of NPR.

The award honors the late *Washington Post* medical writer Victor Cohn, who distinguished himself by the clarity, honesty, and effectiveness of his reporting during a 50-year career. He was also a co-founder in 1959 of the CASW. ■

(source: news release)

Mosaic Magazine Archive Available Online



Now available online is the *Mosaic* Magazine Archive (**www.mosaicsciencemagazine.org**) consisting of articles, published from 1970 to 1992, in the National Science Foundation's flagship magazine. Material is searchable by issue, topic, and author.

Mosiac was launched in the winter of 1969/1970. Initially conceived as a house organ, the magazine was designed to define NSF to its constituencies in government and the science community. *Mosaic* soon began to focus on research projects pursued by foundation grantees in the nation's universities and research institutions and grew from a quarterly to a bimonthly magazine.

For most of *Mosaic*'s 22-year existence, Warren Kornberg was editor. He relied on an extensive string of freelance science journalists and writers who expanded the magazine's scope and coverage. While NSF-supported research remained a core, coverage grew to include much broader areas of research. The reporting often extended well beyond U.S. borders and included extensive travel by writers to enable them to spend time with the scientists whose work they were reporting on, where it was going on.

The goal of *Mosaic* was to provide scientists a place to keep up with frontier research in areas outside of their own specialties, written at a level at which the material would be respected by the scientists in the field but accessible to a sophisticated lay readership.

The magazine's roster of bylines included science writer stalwarts George Alexander, Tom Alexander, Joseph Alper, Peter Andrews, Marcia Bartusiak, Sandra Blakeslee, Mort La Brecque, Carla Carlson, William Check, Ron Cowen, William Cromie, Lucille Day, John Douglas, Ed Edelson, Lee Edson, Ann Finkbeiner, Arthur Fisher, Kendrick Frazier, Frederic Golden, Billy Goodman,

Peter Gwynne, Allen Hammond, T. A. Heppenheimer, David Holzman, Sam Iker, Diane Johnson, Robert Kanigel, Warren Kornberg, Henry Lansford, David Leff, Roger Lewin, Randi Londer, John Ludwigson, Gail McBride, William Metz, Norman Metzger, Anne Simon Moffat, Derral Mulholand, Steve Olson, Ben Patrusky, Charles Petit, John Pfeiffer, Patricia Pine, Daniel Rapoport, Boyce Rensberger, Leslie Roberts, Joann Rodgers, Albert Rosenfeld, Jane Stein, Mitchell Waldrop, Lois Wingerson, Patrick Young, and David Zimmerman.

After the publication folded in 1992, Kornberg fulfilled request for photocopies of individual articles until about 2003 when, despite the continued relevance of much of the material, demand fell off.

Both the impetus and the technical know-how required to launch the current site came from Fred Herzog, a New York-based IT consultant, computer whiz, and life-long science enthusiast who offered his talent pro bono. Herzog's interest in creating **mosaic-sciencemagazine.org** grew from extended conversations with neighbor and friend Ben Patrusky, executive director of the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing (CASW), who felt that a web-accessible *Mosaic* archive would prove invaluable to a wide range of readers in search of a fuller understanding of the intellectual ferment and historical research strides that undergird many of today's (and tomorrow's) scientific advances and, indeed, many societal issues faced today.

Herzog registered the domain name and enlisted the services of friend and colleague, Seth Hersh, another IT specialist, who also asked no compensation for his contributions. Together they shaped the site's format to make it eminently searchable.

The site format in place, the time came for Warren Kornberg to make a big sacrifice. Readying *Mosaic* for online posting would oblige him to eviscerate his much-treasured set of bound volumes (perhaps the only complete set available). Kornberg did not waver. He took it upon himself to cut those precious volumes apart to separate out individual issues. These he then packed and shipped to New York where, aided by an industrial-strength paper cutter, Heroz sundered the issues to yield the individual pages required for feeding to the high-speed digital scanner.

As *ScienceWriters* went to press, 593 articles had been uploaded as searchable/downloadable PDF files, representing 97 percent of all *Mosaic* articles. ■

(source: Mosaic *archive website)*

Media Access to Federal Scientists Enters Warming Period

BY JENNIFER FREEMAN

On his first day in office in January, President Barack Obama went to work for science writers as he issued a directive on transparency and access to government information. The new president issued an Executive Memo on "Openness and Transparency," reversing a Bush-era rule that favored secrecy over disclosure for requests filed under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Obama turned the clock back to Clinton Attorney General Janet Reno, who said information should be released unless it could cause "forseeable harm." The Bush Administration, in contrast, had urged agencies to consider any "legal basis" for withholding information. The message released by Obama on his first day in office was that government ought to be "transparent," "participatory," and "collaborative."

Impeding journalists' ability to communicate with federal scientists was a matter of policy during the Bush administration, one of several ways in which that administration undermined science in government. I was involved in several Union of Concerned Scientists Scientific Integrity division reports documenting how government undermined science, and how federal scientists were frustrated, to say the least, with the situation.

For a report called *Freedom to Speak?*, the Union of Concerned Scientists documented interference by federal agencies (including NASA, NOAA, FWS, OSHA, and CDC) with scientists' ability to communicate their research findings with journalists.

"A reporter specifically asked to speak to me and was told I was unavailable," reported a NASA scientist. "Requests for specific biologists are given to the field supervisor who generally handles them by himself or with the help of a public affairs person or supervisor, rarely the appropriate biologist," said a scientist at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Some scientists approached the policy creatively: "I ignore the policy and speak directly with the media when I feel it is important to do so (which is often!)" said a Center for Disease Control (CDC) scientist.

The *Freedom to Speak?* report looked at agency media policies and noted an uneven landscape. Some agencies actively tried to keep a short leash on scientists for message control. Some agencies' media policies specifically advised scientists to route all communication with journalists through agency minders. Other agencies lacked a clear policy, or enforced controls unevenly, resulting in

MEDIA continued on page 29

JENNIFER FREEMAN IS A FREELANCE WRITER IN NEW YORK CITY. IN ADDITION TO WORK FOR THE UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY DIVISION, SHE WROTE *SCIENCE 101: ECOLOGY* AND IS CURRENTLY DEVOTING HERSELF TO THE GREEN SCHOOLS ALLIANCE.

Harvard Backs Off Media Policy

BY DUFF WILSON

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"Harvard Backs Off Media Policy," the New York Times*, Sept. 1, 2009.*

DUFF WILSON IS A REPORTER WITH THE *NEW YORK TIMES* WHO COVERS THE PHARMACEUTICAL AND TOBACCO INDUSTRIES.

Online Initiatives from Springer

The academic publisher Springer recently launched a number of free online resources, several of which may be of value to science writers.

SpringerExemplar.com—Identifies terms used for specific areas of research. Exemplar searches over 1,900 journals from Springer's collection for examples of how a word or phrase is used in published literature. Comprehensive coverage includes both current and archival content in all major subject areas including the life sciences, medicine, engineering, mathematics, computer science, business, and law. Exemplar is continuously updated with new content as it is published.

AuthorMapper.com—An online tool for visualizing scientific research. Enables document discovery based on author locations and geographic maps. Integrating content and mapping technology, AuthorMapper provides an easy-to-use, dynamic interface that allows you to:

- Explore patterns in scientific research
- Identify new and historic literature trends
- Discover wider relationships
- Locate other experts

> …continuously updated with new content as it is published.

SpringerImages.com—Contains more than 1.5 million high-quality scientific images, tables, charts and graphs, spanning all scientific subject areas. This first-of-its-kind image database accesses Images.MD as well as images from Springer journals and books, including Open Access content.

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(source: the publisher)

How Dense Are Science Writers Anyway?

BY LARRY KRUMENAKER

In an ideal world one would hope to see science journalists evenly distributed throughout the country in the same distribution as the population. After all we would not want citizens to miss news on scientific developments because of inadequate coverage, now would we?

Using the values for U.S. and NASW population at the time of the completion of this year's roster, there should be one science writer for every 147,856.3 Americans. The NASW "Statistical Section" decided to test this hypothesis using the data collected for the 2009 roster against the distributions of citizens and writers.

As one can see from the Figure 1 map, and also in the roster, each state varies in the number of NASW members. Are science writers equally distributed along with the country's state populations? Well, yes they are. And no, they aren't. (Isn't statistics great?)

The mean value is 43 science writers per political entity (we count the District of Columbia) with Colorado being the most average state, something which they may or may not find insulting. But the distribution is skewed (See Figure 2); only 11 states plus D.C. actually exceed the average. Furthermore, it turns out that just less than 50 percent of NASW's members are found in five places: D.C. and four states. Those are also the only places with triple digit counts which are not only suspicious but also evidence of an apparent conspiracy in the evidence shown in Table 1.

The top two states were tied until last year when Californian apparently lured our esteemed director Tinsley Davis to change coasts, shifting Massachusetts down in numbers and edging New York out of the tie. When confronted with this by a reporter, Davis confirmed this by stating, "I moved to California this year and will happily take credit for bumping it over the top." How long this political gamesmanship has gone on is not known but one wonders whether, now that the plots have been revealed, if there will be further East Coast-West Coast power-plays coming. Could New York, where NASW was founded, make raids upon Massachusetts or lure Marylanders north in order to regain the height of power?

For the record, the remainder of the top 10 includes: Virginia (78), Illinois (71), Washington (69), Pennsylvania (63), and New Jersey (60).

Because of the extreme skewing, the median (that place where everybody else is 50 percent above or below) is only about 12 writers per state. The states of Indiana and Maine are the most 50-50 states in our membership.

Other than luring science writers from one coast to another, does this distribution correspond with any other factor? We investigated several factors in search of an answer.

U.S. POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

Our initial assumption presumes that the number of science writers varies with the same denseness as, say, congressmen. Table 2 lists the top ten states in order of population.

Only four of the top 10 NASW states are in the top 10 U.S. states by population but the goodness of fit is imperfect. If one looks at the lowest five NASW state counts (Table 3, counts of 1 to 5 writers), there are 11 such states.

Again, the correlation is imperfect, only three states in common, and D.C. is low in population yet high in science writers. While some correlation to state population is evident in these two tables, there clearly is a confounding third variable not detected.

CORRELATION TO CITY POPULATIONS

To determine this hidden variable we set a finer scale to examine, the cities with the largest numbers of science writers. At first that seemed to be a dead end. Only three of America's top 10 cities have large numbers of science writers, New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia (and this one is pretty low for a "high"—15)!

But then we struck statistical pay dirt correlating the cities with the most writers WITHIN each state. In Table 4 is that data.

In general, when science writers are not uniformly distributed within a state and congregate in higher than average densities, they are attracted like particles into the scientific black holes of that state, the major scientific or intellectual centers. But this coagulation occurs only over a critical mass factor and not all states appear to have the mass. Notice that the states fall into three groups:

> Group 1: All (or nearly all) are found in the major intellectual center of the state or area (D.C., Wisc.) because of (or causing) an apparent desert of intellectualness outside of the center;
>
> Group 2: A grouping where the writers are equally split between the largest center and the rest of the state (~50 percent of writers are found in the center in N.Y., Wash. and perhaps minimally in states such as Ill., Va.—the border is not clear);
>
> Group 3: A uniform population spread through all places in the state (most of the rest, like New Jersey and the small (i.e. most states) with no apparent massings.

We can conclude that in most states the science writers are fairly dispersed throughout the population, scouring for stories in uniformly spread territories. There are a handful of exceptions: certain states have large attractors that bring surplus writers into smaller geographic centers within the state. On the national level, there is little correlation with overall state populations at the extremes but in middle (populated) American states we do find the density of science writers fairly balanced…in numbers at least.

One final note. If a science writer is looking for a place where they can have the whole place to themselves, South Dakota has a vacancy sign. ■

FIGURE 1 COURTESY OF JESSE TAGGERT; FIGURE 2 COURTESY OF LARRY KRUMENAKER

LARRY KRUMENAKER, PH.D., ATLANTA FREELANCE WRITER, EDUCATOR, AND PUBLISHER OF THE NEW PRACTITIONER JOURNAL THE CLASSROOM ASTRONOMER SPENDS WAY TOO MUCH TIME WITH EXCEL SPREADSHEETS AND SPSS.

TABLE 1
The geographic entities with the most science writers

California	297
New York	296
Maryland	170
Massachusetts	146
D.C.	137

TABLE 2
States with the most population
(Italics indicate it is a Top 10 NASW state)

	IN MILLIONS
California	37
Texas	24
New York	19
Florida	18
Illinois	13
Pennsylvania	12
Ohio	12
Michigan	10
Georgia	10
North Carolina	9

FIGURE 1
Number of NASW Writers per State

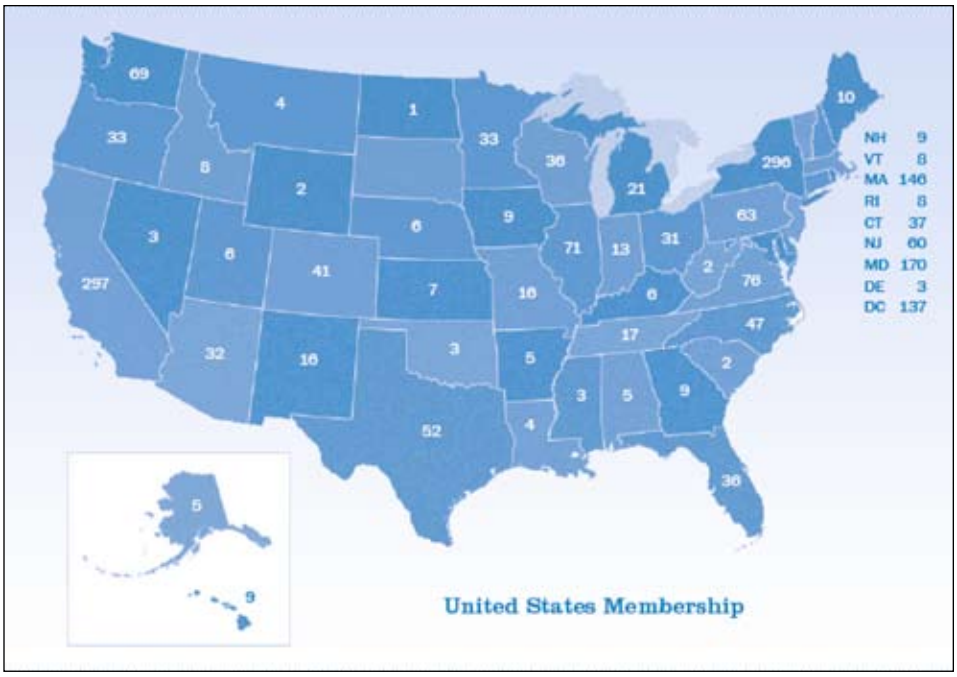

FIGURE 2
Distribution of state counts that have NASW Writers

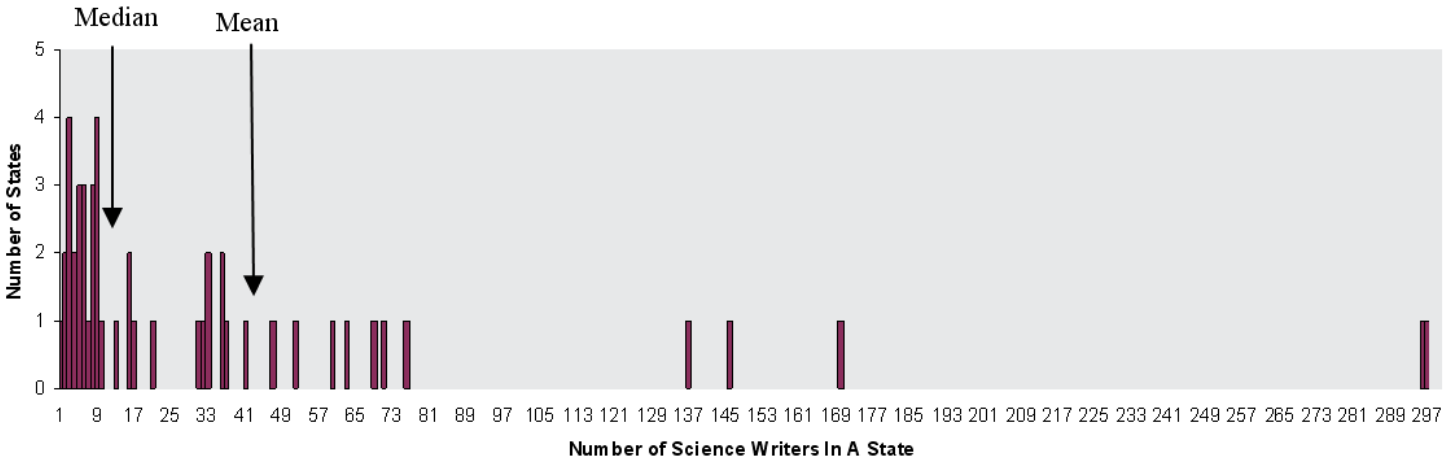

TABLE 3
Lowest, positive count states of science writers versus population rankings
(Italics indicate states common to both lists)

NASW COUNTS	STATES	HIGHEST TO LOWEST CENSUS POPULATION RANKINGS
5	Arkansas	New Hampshire
5	Alabama	Hawaii
4	Louisiana	Rhode Island
3	Nevada	Montana
3	Oklahoma	*Delaware*
3	Mississippi	South Dakota
3	*Delaware*	Alabama
2	*Wyoming*	*North Dakota*
2	South Carolina	Vermont
2	West Virginia	District of Columbia
1	*North Dakota*	*Wyoming*

TABLE 4
Comparison of numbers of science writers in the largest groupings in each state

STATE	LARGEST CITY	WRITERS	PERCENT OF WRITERS IN THE STATE
California	Berkeley	43	14%
New York	NYC	141	48%
District of Columbia	DC	137	100%
Maryland	Bethesda	33	19%
Massachusetts	Cambridge	31	21%
Pennsylvania	Phila./Pitts. (tie)	15	24%
Washington	Seattle	33	48%
Illinois	Chicago	23	32%
Virginia	Arlington	19	32%
Texas	Austin	13	25%
New Jersey	Princeton	6	10%
Wisconsin	Madison	27	75%

Five Atrocious Science Clichés to Throw Down a Black Hole

BY BETSY MASON

A black hole is the perfect place for stuff you never want to see again. So *Wired Science* is joining Wired.com's extended black hole party by chucking in some of the worst, most overused science clichés.

This purging project was kicked off by our pals at *Underwire*. They were inspired by scientists at the Israel Institute of Technology who, while searching for Hawking radiation, recently created an acoustic black hole using Bose-Einstein condensates. So *Underwire* jumped on the opportunity to throw five atrocious albums into that black hole, never to be heard again. Autopia followed by launching five atrocious car models into a black hole (the regular kind out in space, of course). This week is our turn.

After careful consideration and consultation with members of the local science writing community (only some of them were drunk), we have selected the five most annoying and ubiquitous clichés we think should be sucked into a black hole, forever banished from all future descriptions of science.

1. HOLY GRAIL

To me, this is the mother of all bad science clichés, the worst offender. And I recently learned I have backup on this opinion from the venerable journal *Nature* which has literally banned scientists from putting holy grails in their papers.

But outside of *Nature*, grails are running rampant through science writing. A Google search for "holy grail" + science OR scientists OR researchers yields 2.6 million hits. Among those hits, the holy grail of: physics, climate change, biofuels, cancer research, crystallography, bodybuilding, pain relief, plant biology, nanoscience, cardiology, optical computing, catalyst design and human gait analysis.

Here are just a few examples: *Discover* asks: "Can Engineers Achieve the Holy Grail of Energy: Infinite and Clean?" and *The Telegraph* (UK) says: "'Holy grail'" drug can help scars heal, new research shows."

And yes, *Wired Science* is not immune: "Astronomers Closer to Exoplanet Holy Grail." But no more. I hereby decree all holy grails banned from *Wired Science*.

2. SILVER BULLET

No more silver bullets, please. Apparently they are really only meant for werewolves, witches, and the occasional monster. While we're at it, magic bullets can go into the black hole as well. They attract too many angry conspiracy theorists. In a Google search, the two together, along with science terms, gets you 1.7 million hits. And because Alexis Madrigal hasn't read his werewolf texts very closely, he occasionally tries to put golden bullets into his stories, so we'll toss those as well.

According to Google, science paradigms have shifted 1.9 million times.

A lot of these bullets are aimed at medical targets. The *LA Times* asks if there's "A magic bullet for pandemic flu?" And I can't tell if this instance, "Scientists to Tackle Illness with 'silver bullet,'" is made better or worse by the fact that the thing being called a silver bullet is actually silver.

Things that are not silver or magic bullets: antioxidants, carbon capture, disk encryption, GM crops, vitamins, and carbon dioxide mosquito traps. At *Wired Science*, there is no magic or silver bullet for: cancer, the energy crisis, and cloning endangered turtles.

And as long as we're tossing all the bullets, we might as well send the smoking gun in after them.

3. SHEDDING LIGHT

Why must everything always be shedding light on something else? In addition to the light I shed on dark matter in 2006, light has also been shed on virtually everything you can think of: quantum computation, primate eye evolution, the connection between brain and loneliness, consciousness, catalyzed reactions, air quality, and even the Hope diamond. Googling "shed* light" + science OR scientists OR research returns 6.66 million hits, including these:

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory: "Robotic Floats Shed New Light on the Iron Hypothesis," the *Washington Post*: Researchers "Shed More Light on Bird Flu," and *The Boston Globe*: "Scientists shed new light on invisibility." And, of course, *Wired Science* has been known to shed a bit now and then. A couple gems: "Semen Proteomics Sheds Light on Loyalty and Evolution," "Sea Cucumber Sheds Light on Healing Mechanisms."

Not everyone is trapped in this shed, however. Notably, *Nature* reporter Erika Check has been known to throw light on stuff like the origins of life. (Full disclosure: Erika is on my soccer team.) *UPDATE: Alex Witze has taken full responsibility on behalf of* Nature*'s editors for any clichés that have appeared in Erika's stories.*

4. MISSING LINK

Don't even tell me you aren't sick of all the missing links constantly being discovered. It's an epidemic. Googling along with science terms gets you 4.2 million missing links. I mean, what could possibly still be missing after all that? There must be an unbroken, fully linked chain running from kindergarten art projects through Lucy all the way to the Creationist Museum.

Of course, a huge proportion of those links are fossils, including Ida, the supposed missing link between humans and lemurs that clogged up the science news cycle for days in May. Some of the other lucky things that have found their links: black holes, cancer gene therapy, industrial relations and the southern ocean.

Slate has wondered: How Many Times Will Paleontologists Find the "Missing Link"? *Wired Science* is also lousy with lost links including: "Missing Link in Pulsar Evolution Is a Cannibal" and "Viral Missing Link Caught on Film." But my favorite

BETSY MASON IS WIRED.COM SCIENCE EDITOR.

example is this *New York Daily News* story on "Ida: Missing link found?" Scientists unveil fossil of 47 million-year-old primate, *Darwinius masillae*, which also has a holy grail thrown in.

5. PARADIGM SHIFT

According to Google, science paradigms have shifted 1.9 million times. I'm actually surprised it's not more. Because really, when you get down to it, what doesn't qualify as a paradigm shift these days? Science writing can actually take the blame for creating this beast and then letting it escape into the rest of the world. It was first used in Thomas Kuhn's "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" in 1962, and yes I learned that on Wikipedia, but I also have a copy of the book on my shelf, so there.

Wired Science has only shifted a handful of paradigms in fields including drug research and genetics, and happily, no paradigm has shifted since the current editor (me) joined the team. But these shifts may have infected some other corners of Wired.com including Autopia and Game Life.

And elsewhere in the world, paradigms are super shifty, especially in scientific papers. For example, the journal *Sexualities*: "Reading Porn: The Paradigm Shift in Pornography Research." According to the Institute of Physics, space science in the U.K. was on the verge of a shift in May (not sure of the current status of this paradigm). Even science fairs have apparently shifted: "A Global Paradigm Shift in Science Fairs." ■

"5 Atrocious Science Clichés to Throw Down a Black Hole," Wired Science*, July 17, 2009.*

Calling for Tax Advice the Inexpensive Way

BY JULIAN BLOCK

Internal Revenue Code changes have averaged one-per-day over the past eight years —with 500 revisions in 2008 alone. Who's counting? Nina Olson, the National Taxpayer Advocate, announced the statistics in her annual report to Congress. An independent organization within the IRS, the Taxpayer Advocate Service helps taxpayers resolve complaints with the agency when problems cannot be resolved through normal channels.

Will Advocate Olson's reports convince our lawmakers to draw back from their drawing board? Not during these troubled times. Expect them to enact even more alterations to an already confusing code in the immediate future.

How do freelance writers and other individuals who need to focus on tax planning all year long keep on top of all those major and minor modifications? Most decide to become clients of tax professionals—advice givers adept at assuaging affluent angst and able to avoid pitfalls adroitly while capitalizing on opportunities to diminish, delay, or deep-six amounts that otherwise would swell IRS coffers. And that kind of advice does not come cheap. In locales like my neck of the woods, near New York City, such clients should expect to pay hourly fees of several hundred dollars and up for guidance. Help is available from lawyers, CPAs, financial planners, or Enrolled Agents—persons licensed to practice before the IRS, who are neither attorneys nor CPAs, but who are former IRS employees or have passed rigorous tax examinations administered by the IRS.

Fortunately, pricey professionals are not the only source of succor for Americans apprehensive about their financial futures and their retirement prospects. There are alternatives that are easier on the pocket. One option is to sign up at places like high schools and community colleges for inexpensive adult education courses on various aspects of personal finance.

It is also possible to obtain advice at no cost from knowledgeable, disinterested professionals. This resource is available to an ever-increasing number of individuals who belong to affinity groups or work for companies that offer such advice. Individuals eligible for assistance can call centers staffed primarily by financial planners who offer advice only—untainted by compensation linked to commissions on product sales.

Internal Revenue Code changes have averaged one-per-day over the past eight years

But what is available for people in need of instant advice who are without access to call-in centers? Thanks to technology, there are person-to-person Internet advice sites that let them talk to experts on topics like taxes and investing. It is important to note, however, that these sites do not vouch for the accuracy of their experts' advice.

A major purveyor of telephone counseling and hand-holding is Keen—a company that describes itself as "Your Personal Advisor," offering live, immediate advice for everyday life. In the interests of full disclosure, I was among the first dispensers of tax advice recruited by Keen, when it debuted in 2000.

Keen's specialists cover a broad range of financial topics—anything from tax-efficient maneuvers that callers can implement themselves, to new theories to test out on real-world advisers, to portfolio diversification strategies.

TAX ADVICE continued on page 29

JULIAN BLOCK, AN ATTORNEY IN LARCHMONT, N.Y., HAS BEEN CITED AS "AN ACCOMPLISHED WRITER ON TAXES" (*WALL STREET JOURNAL*). HIS BOOKS INCLUDE *TAX TIPS FOR WRITERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, ARTISTS*, AVAILABLE AT WWW.JULIANBLOCKTAXEXPERT.COM.

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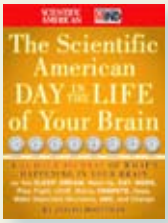
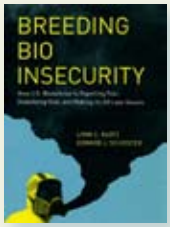
The Scientific American Day in the Life of Your Brain: A 24-Hour Journal of What's Happening in Your Brain **by Judith Horstman (NASW), published by Jossey-Bass (Wiley)**



Why am I so cranky in the morning? How effective is multitasking? When do I make the best decisions? Journalist Horstman reveals the answers to these questions and a lot more. She reviews a full day of brainwork by accounting for the mental processes of everyday activities, arranged by hour, beginning with 5 a.m. and "coming to consciousness." Horstman shows how, as hormone and neurotransmitter levels change throughout the day, there may be an optimal time for everything. Moving through the workday, Horstman discusses stress, decision making, hunger and fatigue, ADHD, and more, before returning home to cover music, humor, sex, fear, and sleep. Horstman's prose is packed with useful information such how meditation may increase attention while delaying aging; brain exercise and a strong social network decrease the odds of developing dementia; and diet can quell morning crabbiness, increase afternoon focus, and promote sleep. Multitasking, as Horstman explains, is less like an efficient model of problem solving and more like channel-surfing. Stress, she says, "may be the single worst thing your brain does to your heart." Fully referenced, this *Scientific American* publication targets those with interest in mind-body interaction, mental health, or aging. ■ *The press representative is Erin Lane Beam 415-782-3218 and ebeam@wiley.com.*

Breeding Bio Insecurity: How U.S. Biodefense Is Exporting Fear, Globalizing Risk, and Making Us All Less Secure **by Lynn C. Klotz and Ed Sylvester (NASW), published by University of Chicago Press**

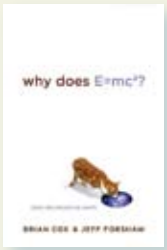


Freelance Ed Sylvester teaches science and medical writing at Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication. Co-author Lynn Klotz is a senior scientist with the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, in Washington. They maintain that the billions of dollars spent since the 9/11 attacks on measures to defend the population against the threat of biological weapons hasn't made us any safer. According to the authors, the fundamental problem is the danger caused by the sheer size and secrecy of our biodefense effort. "Thousands of scientists spread throughout hundreds of locations are now working with lethal bioweapons agents—but their inability to make their work public causes suspicion among our enemies and allies alike, even as the enormous number of laboratories greatly multiplies the inherent risk of deadly accidents or theft. Meanwhile, vital public health needs go unmet because of this new biodefense focus." True biosecurity, the authors argue, will require a multipronged effort based in an understanding of the complexity of the issue, guided by scientific ethics, and watched over by a vigilant citizenry attentive to the difference between fear mongering and true analysis of risk. ■ *Press representative is Levi Stahl lstahl@press.uchicago.edu. Ed Sylvester can be reached at ed.sylvester@asu.edu or 480-965-421.*

The Frog Scientist **by Pamela S. Turner (NASW), Photographs by Andy Comins, published by Houghton Mifflin Books for Children**

What's the difference between a frog and a toad? Turner explains and points out the western spadefoot toad, despite its common name, is actually a frog. The book focuses on Tyrone Hayes and his works trying to save the frogs from their drastic decline. A graduate of Harvard and Berkeley, he has already discovered that the most commonly used pesticides in the U.S. (atrazine) may play a role, as well as loss of habitat and a devastating fungal disease. Turner's text is easy to understand and enlightening about creatures most of us take for granted. The photographs of the creatures are spectacular but I admit I had a hard time getting over the one of a frog eating a newborn mouse. If students want to know about frogs such as the Waxy-Monkey Tree Frog, the Strawberry Poison Dart Frog, and the Bumblebee Poison Dart Frog, they will find the portraits and prose about them in Turner's book. ■ *The PR person for book is Jenn Taber at jennifer.taber@hmhpub.com or 617-351-3671. Turner can be reached at pstrst@pacbell.net or 510-547-8565.*

Why Does E=mc²? (And Why Should We Care?) **by Brian Cox and Jeff Forshaw published by DaCapo Press**



U.K. professors Brian Cox, a particle physicist (named one of the "sexiest men alive" by *People Magazine*); and Jeff Forshaw, who received the Institute of Physics Maxwell Medal for outstanding contributions to theoretical physics, go on a journey to the frontier of 21st century science to consider the real meaning behind the iconic sequence of symbols that make up Einstein's most famous equation. Early praise for the book includes: "Cox and Forshaw offer lay readers a fascinating account of modern scientists' view of the world, and how it got that way...Though the basics are covered in detail, there's plenty here for science buffs to ponder" (*Publishers Weekly* online). "A mild-mannered, digressive, mostly math-free walk-through of the world's most famous equation...[It] remind[s] us that Einstein's equation is not some esoteric idea best pondered by scientific supermen, but a profound insight that continues to change lives...Cox and Forshaw's enthusiasm for their material is plain...You will find them accommodating escorts" (*Boston Globe*). "[Cox and Forshaw] have blazed a clear trail into forbidding territory, from the mathematical structure of space-time all the way to atom bombs, astrophysics, and the origin of mass" (*New Scientist*). ■ *The press representative for the book is Lissa Warren 617-252-5212; lissa.warren@peresusbooks.com.*

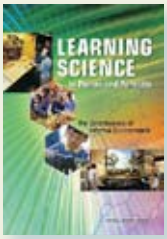
Best Friends Forever: Surviving a Breakup with Your Best Friend **by Irene S. Levine, Ph.D (NASW), published by Overlook Press**

Levine is the Huffington Post's "Friendship Doctor," a psychologist, a journalist, and a professor at NYU School of Medicine. Men, jobs, children, personal crises, irreconcilable social gaps —these are just a few of the reasons that may cause a female friendship to end. "No matter what the circumstances, the breakup of a female friendship leaves a woman devastated and asking herself difficult questions," she writes. "Was someone to blame? Is the friendship worth fighting for? How can I prevent this from ever happening again?" The book covers:

- Why friendships fall apart
- Coping with getting dumped
- How to end a friendship that can't be fixed
- Moving forward after a traumatizing breakup

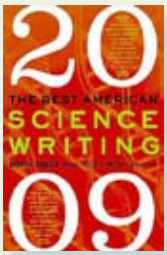
Levine draws from years of research and the personal testimonials of thousands of women to provide anecdotes and solutions to these complicated situations. The book contains tools for personal assessment, case stories, and actionable advice for saving, ending, or re-evaluating a relationship. ■ *Levine can be reached at irene@irenelevine.com. PR for the book is Vida Engstrand at vengstrand@overlookny.com. More info at http://www.TheFriendshipBlog.com/book.*

Learning Science in Informal Environments: People, Places, and Pursuits **by Philip Bell, Bruce Lewenstein (NASW), Andrew W. Shouse, and Michael A. Feder (eds.), published by National Academies Press**



Learning Science in Informal Environments is a guide for program and exhibit designers, evaluators, staff of science-rich informal learning institutions and community-based organizations, scientists interested in educational outreach, federal science agency education staff, and K-12 science educators. The book draws together disparate literatures, synthesizes the state of knowledge, and articulates a common framework for the next generation of research on learning science in informal environments across a life span. Contributors include recognized experts in a range of disciplines—research and evaluation, exhibit designers, program developers, and educators. They also have experience in a range of settings—museums, after-school programs, science and technology centers, media enterprises, aquariums, zoos, state parks, and botanical gardens. Editor Bruce Lewenstein is a professor of science communication at Cornell and a longtime scholar on science journalism. The book can be read online for free (http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12190). ■ *Publicist is Barbara Murphy at bmurphy@nasw.edu 202-334-1902. Lewenstein can be reached at b.lewenstein@cornell.edu.*

The Best American Science Writing 2009 **Natalie Angier (editor) Published by Ecco/ Harper**



Edited by Pulitzer Prize-winning *New York Times* columnist and bestselling author Natalie Angier, *The Best American Science Writing 2009* is distinguished by new and impressive voices as well as some of the foremost names in science writing. Among them is NASW member J. Madeleine Nash, former *TIME* magazine senior science correspondent now a freelance writer, for "Back to the Future" (*High Country News*, Oct. 13, 2008). This anthology provides a comprehensive overview of where science has taken us—and where it is headed. Of note is a piece from the satirical website "The Onion": "Evolutionists Flock to Darwin-Shaped Wall Stain." ■ *PR is Beth Harper at beth.harper@harpercollins.com or 212-207-7985.*

NOTE: Ecco/Harper seeks submissions for *The Best American Science Writing 2010*. Send work published in 2009 electronically to series editor Jesse Cohen at jesse.cohen5@verizon.net. Include a brief cover letter. Manuscripts will not be returned. Deadline: Dec. 31, 2009.

NASW President
Mariette DiChristina
Scientific American and
Scientific American Mind
MDICHRISTINA@SCIAM.COM

President's Letter

Hat Trick

SUPERSTITIOUS PEOPLE CLAIM THAT EVENTS HAPPEN IN THREES. A COMMON HOPEFUL SAYING AFTER A COUPLE OF FAILURES IS "THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM." AND, AS EVERY GOOD JOURNALIST KNOWS, THREE THINGS EQUAL A COVERABLE TREND.

I find myself contemplating the significance of this number because of three upcoming meetings that will mean a great deal to the National Association of Science Writers and to the membership at large. Each of them speaks to how very far we've come, both as a profession and as an organization that seeks to serve our members' needs. First, there is this year's ScienceWriters 2009 meeting in Austin, Texas, which actually may have concluded by the time you read this letter. Second is the ScienceWriters 2010 meeting, which will commemorate the 75th anniversary of the National Association of Science Writers and the 50th of our supportive sister group, the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing (CASW). Third comes in 2011, when I hope I will see many of you in Cairo, Egypt, for the seventh World Federation of Science Journalists meeting the result of a partnership between NASW as mentor and the Arab Science Journalists Association as meeting host.

But first, Texas. The Austin meeting marks five years since NASW combined its popular workshops with the annual CASW New Horizons in Science briefings, lab tours, and field trips. In that time period, we've learned to collaborate to create a truly national meeting developed by science writers and for science writers, with many speakers from around the country joining us at each host institution. Vice President Nancy Shute and the workshop committee have also done their usual outstanding job on the programming this time around. It's always a treat for me to learn from the best in the business.

The Austin meeting marks five years since NASW combined its popular workshops with the annual CASW New Horizons in Science

Next up is the big anniversary meeting, which will be at Yale University in New Haven, Conn., in October 2010. In addition to the workshops and outstanding briefings from scientists based at Yale and other institutions, we are planning a gala party to celebrate our science-writing diamond and gold anniversaries. At the invitation of CASW President Cris Russell, I am also on a panel at Yale this fall at the medical school to talk about the value of scientists speaking to the public and will further build connections in advance of our meeting.

Third is a truly exciting step for our organization. As many of you know, we have been partnering as a mentor group for the Arab Science Journalists Association. Our relationship began as part of a twinning forged in 2007 under the auspices of the World Federation of Science Journalists. I am grateful for the efforts of our hardworking international liaison and former NASW president, Deborah Blum, who coordinates our activities. A number of the ASJA board members joined us at our annual meeting in Spokane, Wash., two years ago, to learn more about our organization and how it works.

Then, several months ago, Deborah and Nadia El-Awady, an ASJA founder, discussed with the NASW board the idea of taking our twinning to another level. The ASJA wanted to host the 2011 World Federation meeting in Cairo, and they wanted our guidance as part of a co-bid. It is an opportunity to support science writers and the free flow of scientific information, contributing to the popularization of science topics in the region. Egypt lies in both the Arab world and in Africa, and thus represents two important areas of the world—and the first time a World Federation meeting would be held in either. As the bid letter noted, Egypt boasts 18 government universities; 21 private universities, academies and learning institutes; 26 protectorates; 48 museums; and just under 10 research centers. It has the largest number of science writers in the region, with a science-writing history going back to the 18th century. And speaking of history, think of the field trips!

In July, I was at the London meeting of the World Federation when organizers announced that our co-bid was the winner for 2011. I wish you could have heard the shouts of joy. I will never forget it. I feel honored and proud of the role NASW is playing in this important endeavor. NASW cannot fund raise because of the conflicts of interest for our organization, but we nonetheless have been able to provide $10,000 in seed money, a critical component to getting good planning started; CASW has also provided seed funding. And we are not done. Nadia El-Awady is the bid coordinator, and a truly remarkable woman. Her ASJA team will develop programming with Deborah, former President Robert Lee Hotz, and members of NASW. (I was still in London, in fact, when I got the first query about proposing a workshop session!) Together, we will bring about the very best kind of positive support for quality science writing throughout the world. ■

DICHRISTINA PHOTO COURTESY OF SELINA GEROSA; DAVIS PHOTO COURTESY OF MARK D. COHEN

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Cyberbeat

As we work toward a major redesign of the NASW website, we've gone ahead and made a few tweaks to the annual membership renewal pages. You'll see the results when renewal season opens in December.

The biggest change is the addition of a membership survey. Its purpose is to give NASW's leadership an annual snapshot of our organization's makeup—how many staff writers, how many freelancers, how many PIOs. We've kept the questions to a mere five, and three require just "yes/no" answers.

We've also added a way for you to opt out of having the print edition of *ScienceWriters* mailed to you each quarter. More than a few members have asked for this, saying they prefer to read it online. Now, if you want to join them, you'll find a box to check on the same page where you update your name, address, and other membership roster data. It's labeled "Remove me from postal mail list for *ScienceWriters* quarterly magazine."

Just as a reminder, you can read the current issue of *SW*, plus 15 years of back issues, in the members' area of the NASW website. We try to get each new issue posted as soon as it goes to the mailing house, so you might be able to read it online even before its hits your mailbox.

The rest of the membership renewal process remains the same. There are four steps:

1. Update your roster data.
2. Fill out the new membership survey.
3. Fill out the Authors Coalition survey, which helps NASW collect income from overseas royalties.
4. Pay your dues online using either a Paypal account, a major credit card, or an electronic check. A PDF form is also available for those who prefer to pay by mail.

NASW-FREELANCE

For office-bound freelancers, few things are more important than a good chair. In late July, Pullman, Wash., science

All Members Must Renew Soon

Dispatches from the Director

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NASW Career Development Grants

The inaugural round of NASW's Career Development Grants produced a great response. Fifty-one science writers applied for funding of a broad spectrum of professional development training. The initial program allotment of $25,000 afforded the opportunity to meet about 30 percent of requests, awarding 16 grants (see page 1).

Career development grants and other NASW programs, such as meeting travel grants, are funded by disbursements from the Authors Coalition of America, which distributes U.S. copyright royalties collected overseas. Your answers to the Authors Coalition survey are what determine the amount of funds NASW receives. Please keep up the good work. It requires five minutes or less of your time to click through the survey when you receive your electronic renewal notice. And also keep in mind that the survey categories refer to all the work done throughout your career, not just current work. So even if you are retired or between gigs or have done different kinds of writing or editing at various times, it's important that you fill out the survey and help NASW derive the maximum financial benefit. Those funds, in turn, allow NASW to provide science writers with needed services.

Memberships expire Dec. 31; renewals are due by Jan. 31

And what a segue:
It will soon be renewal time

All NASW memberships expire on Dec. 31. You will receive an electronic invoice for the 2010 renewal year the week of Nov. 16, with payment due by Jan. 31, 2010. Membership annual dues remain at the same low rate they have been the past seven years. A $20 late fee will be assessed for renewals processed after Jan. 31.

Another reason to renew on time: NASW has a deadline to report on the Authors Coalition survey. If you're late in completing the survey, your answers may not count and NASW will lose out when royalties are calculated.

As part of renewals this year, we will be asking a few questions to gauge what kinds of activities members are engaged in. Answers will only be used in aggregate form to develop new programs and member services. And some of the best ideas come from you: If you have an idea for a new service or program that NASW could offer, write director@nasw.org. ■

writer Marcia Hill Gossard decided that hers didn't measure up.

"I was told by my physical therapist this morning that I need a new office chair with lumbar support and arms that move forward and backward," she wrote. "Any suggestions?"

You bet there were. But your humble cybrarian found himself nodding most vigorously at this early response from Michigan freelancer Catherine Shaffer, a kindred soul if ever there was one: "My advice is to forget the chair and get yourself a laptop computer. Then move around a bit through your work day. Work sometimes in an office chair, sometimes on the couch, sometimes in a coffee shop."

An unmade bed works too, if you have enough pillows. But let's continue with some more to-the-point replies:

■ Washington, D.C, freelancer Bob Roehr: "I got an Aeron chair many years ago for $800 and given the amount of time I spend in it, it is far and away the best purchase I ever made. I just googled and saw where they are now selling for about $400."

■ San Francisco freelancer Erica Gies: "I second the Aeron rec. I've had one since 2000 and LOVE IT. You can adjust every aspect of it, which is key. You should have a consultation with an ergonomic expert or get a book on the basics."

■ Brooklyn, N.Y. science writer Cassandra Willyard: "I would NOT recommend the chair I have, which is a $150 Office Depot chair with arms. The arms don't adjust, so if I raise my chair up all the way to be at the right height for my laptop keyboard, the arms run into the desk and I can't scoot all the way in."

■ Hampton, N.J., consultant Jim Cook: "I have a BodyBilt chair with a deeply contoured "tractor" seat <**http://www.ergo4me.com/2502.php**>. One cannot slouch in this chair (at least, if you're male)."

■ New York City freelancer Jennifer Freeman: "I use a chair called a Caper Multitask which, like the Aeron, is by Herman Miller but retails for $450. ... Herman Miller also lists another $450 chair called the Celle that advertises lots of adjustability. I like the Caper's low back profile and find the hard (though perforated) plastic back more comfortable than netting."

Read more by searching the NASW-freelance archives for "New office chair."

NASW-TALK

An ages-old debate about the balance in journalism between entertaining and educating was rekindled in late May when NASW vice president Nancy Shute called attention to a survey asking toxicologists what they thought of various publications and websites.

"The toxicologists rated WebMD as most accurate (56%), followed by Wikipedia (45%), WaPo/NYT/WSJ (15%), followed by (sorry) *USA Today* at 6%," she wrote. "What do you think?"

Among the early responders was deputy humble cybrarian A'ndrea Elyse Messer, a public information officer at Penn State, who asked some unanswered questions.

"I'd really like to have examples of the errors they see in the articles," she said. "Are they examples of 'not all the information is in the story,' which would account for the *USA Today* rating? Or are they arguments about journalistic approaches being too simple or not using the proper jargon and the plain English word doesn't quite mean the same?"

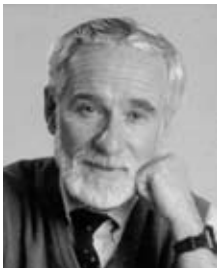
That last comment lit a fuse and exposed an underlying tension in our business. "When 'proper jargon' and 'plain English' don't mean the same, then 'proper jargon' ought to be used, said Pebble Beach, Calif., science writer Charles Daney.

Not so fast, replied longtime *TIME* magazine science writer and now freelancer Michael Lemonick: "Nonscientists are, in my experience, seriously turned off by technical terminology. The only reason to use more than the absolute minimum is if you want to make sure nobody reads what you write."

Daney stuck to his guns and pointed to society's low level of scientific literacy as evidence of journalism's failings.

"Whatever the reason, there's clearly a massive failure in the delivery of actual understanding," he said. "Perhaps what traditional journalists do is simply a great waste of time, which the economic system is now in the process of winding down, it appears."

For the entire discussion, search the NASW-talk archives for "The toxicologists think Wikipedia." ■



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News from Afar

It was to be the summer of our discontent.

THE WEATHER WAS LOUSY, THE ECONOMY WAS IN THE TANK, NEWSPAPERS WERE IN BANKRUPTCY, AND SCIENCE JOURNALISM WAS IN A DOWNWARD DEATH SPIRAL.

Unless, of course, you were in London from June 29 to July 3.

The skies were clear and temperatures tropical. Pubs, restaurants, and theaters were standing-room only. The British press (quality and tabloid alike) enjoyed a financial windfall occasioned by Michael Jackson's demise. And, nearly 1,000 science scribblers streamed into Westminster's Central (Methodist) Hall, where, even if not finding salvation, they at least got some reassurance that there can be life after the death of traditional media.

For attendees of the sixth World Conference of Science Journalists, the recession-defying frenzy of the city outside, combined with the promises of new media miracles inside, offered ample cause for the triumph of hope over reality.

Not surprisingly, sessions on advanced communication technologies and their impact on the future of science journalism drew large crowds. In fact, the pervasiveness of "new media" became a defining feature of the conference, described by one observer as "the most blogged about ever." And "twittered," too. A scorekeeper for the Association of British Science Writers tallied 2,526 tweets emanating from 252 contributors.

Alas, those glowing accounts of imaginative, innovative, and almost unlimited new ways for distributing science news—including even grander plans for aggregating it provided by Google News "principle scientist" Krishna Bharat—never seemed to include viable plans for making science journalism pay.

Ironically, the one speaker who actually offered any sort of

CORNELL PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

realistic plan for saving science journalism (and paying journalists!)—Jeff Nesbit of the National Science Foundation—was castigated for what was deemed "underwriting science news." As shocking as that may have seemed to some in the audience, the NSF's production of professionally prepared materials for both media and general public may foretell a future in which the main producers of research reportage are also the underwriters of the research being reported on.

Because the WCSJ is also the official meeting site for its parent organization, the World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ), its social events—including this time lavish receptions at the British Natural History Museum and the London Science Museum—are colorful, polyglot, multinational affairs where journalists from around the world can renew old friendships and make new contacts.

But that same mash-up of languages and cultures can also sometimes confuse and confound matters at WFSJ's General Assembly. Regardless, the London gathering managed to elect two new members to its executive board (Christophe Mvondo of Cameroon and Natasha Mitchell of Australia) who join new President Nadia El-Awady of Egypt, immediate past president Pallab Ghosh of the U.K., Valeria Roman of Argentina, Jia Hepeng of China, and NASW's own Deborah Blum). Cairo, Egypt, was confirmed as the site of the next world conference two years hence. NASW will partner with the Arab Science Journalists Association to co-host the event. WFSJ also voted to accept both corporate and associate members into the federation, with the first of the latter being the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing (CASW).

For more details of WCSJ09, including links to all the tweets, blogs, wikis, and media coverage of the event, as well as updates on federation activities, visit **www.wfsj.org**. A summary video of the conference is available at **http://www.wcsjnews.org/story/20090704/watch-summary-video-conference**.

A final note on the London venue: Central Hall is a sprawling rabbit warren of narrow hallways, Escher-like staircases, and tiny un-air-conditioned meeting rooms surrounding a cavernous main auditorium. And, while not noted in any of the WCSJ09 literature, it is still an active church serving London's Methodists.

A marble effigy of John Wesley stood beside the WCSJ information table at the entrance, a small chapel behind was open for noon services, and a "prayer board" on the wall allowed parishioners to post entreaties to a higher power. It is unknown if any science journalist facing an uncertain future sought divine guidance.

■ ■ ■

A week later, the First International School of Scientific Journalism and Communication was also held in a church. But, oh, what a difference!

The chapel of the former San Domenico Monastery in the medieval hill town of Erice, Sicily, is now the Paul A. M. Dirac Lecture Hall, stripped of any traces of past use, reconfigured as a college classroom, and fitted out with the latest in A/V, IT, and AC equipment. Coffee breaks were held on the upper floor where an entire wall had been removed to allow panoramic views of the farms and villages and wine-dark sea far below.

San Domenico is one of four restored monasteries that make up both the heart of ancient Erice and the modern academic institution known as the Ettore Majorana Foundation and Centre for Scientific Culture. Since 1963, the Centre has hosted thousands of researchers (including more than 100 Nobelists) in 123 "schools." Although covering almost every conceivable discipline of science, from archeometry to ultrasonology, the Centre is perhaps best known internationally for its seminars on astronomy, astrophysics, cosmology, and high-energy physics, reflecting the interests of its founder (and Italian folk hero) physicist Antonino Zichichi.

Science journalism is the latest addition to the Erice curriculum and the "school" organized by Italian television science reporter Barbara Gallovotti and physicist Enzo Iarocci, proved an instant success.

For this first edition, the organizers used the unifying theme of "energy" to link the philosophy of science communication with its practice. This meant alternating presentations by scientists associated with some of the world's major energy and physics projects, including the LHC and ITER, with commentary by the journalists and public affairs specialists charged with, respectively, reporting or promoting such programs. In addition to myself, NASW member Judy Jackson of the Fermi Lab was a speaker.

Given the great variation in individual speaking styles, approaches, and accents (the course language was English…sort of), and the eclectic nature of the audience (journalists, scientists, academics, policy wonks, and interested lay people) the concept didn't always work on the small scale. However, the larger effect was much like a mini-AAAS—long stretches of eyeball-burning boredom interspersed with moments of brilliant insight, all adding up to a comprehensive overview of current international energy research.

Best of all, the relatively small group—about 60 participants—and intimate atmosphere. The auto-free town can be traversed in 30 minutes, conference meals are informal affairs taken in local restaurants, and cafes for after-session gatherings are on every corner. This led to easy and personal interactions between the disparate groups.

For a look at this year's program—and more about the Centre and Erice, too—go to **www.ccsem.infn.it**. The success of the first school of communication has led to plans for a second next year, most likely on the theme of "innovative health research." If you have a chance, go. For the food, the architecture, the ambiance, and, of course, the science. ■

Upcoming Meetings

Feb. 18-22, 2010 • *AAAS Annual Meeting*, San Diego. www.aaas.org/meetings

May 2010 • *2nd International School on Science Journalism*, Erice, Italy. www.ccsem.infn.it

July 2-7, 2010 • *4th EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF2010)*, Torino, Italy. www.esof2010.org

Dec. 6-10, 2010 • *11th International Conference on the Public Communication of Science and Technology (PCST2010)*, New Delhi, India. www.pcst-2010.org

Susan Turner-Lowe
VP of communications
The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens
San Marino, Calif.

The PIO Forum

PR IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IS A LOT OF STINKIN' FUN.

What a difference a decade makes. In 1999, while driving across the Roosevelt Bridge, home to Alexandria, from the National Academies building on Constitution Avenue in Washington, D.C. where I worked as head of News and Public Information, a terrific little story on NPR caught my attention: Trongs of people—thousands of them—had gathered at The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens in Southern California to see—and smell—a *Amorphophallus titanum*, a rare botanical wonder with a fragrance reminiscent of decomposing flesh. Spokesperson of the hour was Lisa Blackburn.

Fast forward a decade and, lo and behold, I find myself sitting in front of a computer at The Huntington, with none other than Lisa Blackburn in the adjacent office as my colleague. Of all the communications offices and gin joints in all the towns, here we find ourselves in the same operation—and as public information officers for (among other things) *Amorphophallus titanum*.

After that 1999 bloom, the rare Sumatran native went "dormant." It made a second surprise appearance in 2002, three weeks after I landed the job as VP for communications at The Huntington.

And to think I'd had a hard time envisioning life outside of the fishbowl that is Washington. There is life, indeed. And in this case, it stunk. And badly.

The *Amorphophallus titanum* was everything it was said to be. Huge, phallic, and utterly foul-smelling. They don't call it the "corpse flower" for nothing. During its full bloom—typically lasting only a few hours—the plant lets off a stench that ranges from eau de locker room to overflowing garbage bin to weeks-old rotting meat. In other words, just what the press corps craves!

But this little stinker is, if nothing else, unpredictable. After its last 2002 performance, it collapsed back into the soil. And it lay in wait.

On an early June morning this year, Lisa came flying into the office, in full town-crier mode, yelling: "IT'S BAAAACCKKK!"

Without warning *A. titanum*'s bloom can go from start to fully open in a matter of hours. Therefore, social media was the obvious choice in alerting media and the public.

Curiously, the plant waited until the dawn of social media to make its next appearance. By the time we learned of it, the blossom was still a bud, but standing at about three and a half feet tall in the conservatory and growing—rapidly.

We knew we had a golden opportunity to venture into the world of YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and blogging, where we could tell our members and general visitors what to expect—and more or less, when—with pictures galore. All that was missing was the scratch and sniff capability for our uploads. (Saving that for next time; surely someone at Microsoft is working on it.)

Local newspapers, radio stations, and TV crews jumped on the story, carrying daily news items, from pre-bloom to really-stinky bloom to deflated, post-bloom demise. The *Los Angeles Times* blogged about it online with links to our website; international wire services picked it up; and the CBS Early Show sent a correspondent. NPR's Joe Palca—The Huntington's science writer in residence—also got into the act, interviewing botanical educator Kitty Connolly for "Talk of the Nation: Science Friday."

The lovely twist in all this was traditional news media was referring their readers/listeners/viewers to our website for the most up-to-date information (constantly updated photos, growth data, and commentary). Thanks to social media, we turned out to be not only the *source* but the *channel*. And what we were doing with that channel made all the difference—we created a blog, we linked to "Stinky" time-lapse video on YouTube; we linked to Facebook and Twitter so people could send in their own comments and photos, and, while doing so, notify their friends.

Our experience with social networking tools taught us some valuable lessons: people do respond when you've got something that's particularly time sensitive. In this case, people following the bloom's progress on our website, Facebook, and Twitter would literally turn their cars around and head to The Huntington the minute we uploaded updates (and we know now to be very careful with that).

By the time all was said and done, we had a nice spike in attendance, several hundred new memberships, a better sense of social networking, and a greater sense of how traditional and new media are working hand-in-glove to disseminate information. And a lovely sense of what a happenin' it all was—both on site as well as online.

The Huntington's web viewers during the bloom rose to some 35,000 (quite high for us). Views of the time-lapse video were upwards of 26,000. Our Facebook fans now stand at more than 2,500 and our Twitter followers are at around 500.

It was in this moment when we realized the excitement—the outright giddiness—of user-generated content, when we got to experience the authenticity of real-time conversations with our audiences. No more

TURNER-LOWE AND PLANT PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY; FACEBOOK IMAGE COURTESY OF THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY AND FACEBOOK; GORDER PHOTO COURTESY OF JO McCULTY

"toss it out there and see what happens."

But how many resources do we throw at something like this? When social media seem to be part of an ever-moving target, how much do you devote to creating and maintaining a presence on MySpace, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Flickr, and blogs—all the while working the media relations piece of it—writing and posting press materials, e-mailing and calling reporters, holding press events. And in the middle of a recession, amidst staff and salary cutbacks, doing more with less.

Even "corpse flowers" have friends on Facebook.

I attended a conference last year where someone said, "Just keep this squarely in mind: you need to meet people where they are." This was said in the context of developing virtual art exhibitions. Meet people where they are. They're online and they're chatty. For those of us with stories to tell and with a desire to have a conversation, this is good news. Not everything will lend itself to this treatment, perhaps, but for The Huntington, the blooming of the *Amorphophallus titanum* provided perfect social networking fodder—it was exotic, visual, dynamic (growing by several inches a day), coy (keeping everyone guessing as to when it might bloom), and when it finally did, it smelled to high heaven. And people really got that. Even without the scratch and sniff. ■

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Our Gang

Eugenie Samuel Reich is definitely "in" this year. He is among the latest crop of Knight Science Journalism Fellows. Reich is a freelance writer and contributor to *New Scientist* magazine and the *Boston Globe*. Congratulate him at eugenie.reich@gmail.com.

***Maryn McKenna is bringing her* creative eye** to the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma—a resource for journalists who cover violence. She has been named the center's 2009 Ochberg Fellow. Write her at mmckenna@mindspring.com.

Just off the runway. **Corinna Wu** spent September in Singapore as a visiting science writer-in-residence at the Agency for Science, Technology, and Research. She interviewed scientists, taught science journalism seminars at Nanyang Technological University, and forged new ties with the science-writing community there. Write her at ckwu@nasw.org to find out what they're wearing on the island.

She writes trendy pieces. **Rabiya Tuma** won runner-up for the 2009 Best Cancer Reporter Award for articles she wrote for *The Economist*, including a Sept. 13, 2008 cover story on cancer stem cells entitled "The Root of All Evil?" The competition is sponsored by the European School of Oncology and includes journalists from across the European Union. Write her at rabiya@nasw.org.

She's got style. **Rachel Ehrenberg**, a writer at *Science News* magazine, won this year's Science Writing Award in Acoustics for Journalists from the Acoustical Society of America for her story "Stranded: a Whale of a Mystery." Write her at rehrenbe@gmail.com.

Best dressed. Freelancer and *Science* correspondent **Jon Cohen** has won the 2009 Excellence in Media Award from the Global Health Council "for his seven-month investigation of how a sudden and major influx of HIV/AIDS funding has been spent in Western research labs and sub-Saharan African treatment and prevention programs." He received his award in May at the 36th Annual International Conference on Global Health in Washington, D.C. And *Science* writer **Yudhijit Bhattacharjee** received the 2009 Media Award from Mental Health America for his story "Shell Shock Revisited: Solving the Puzzle of Blast Trauma." Bhattacharjee received his prize in June at the 2009 Mental Health America Centennial Conference in Washington, D.C. Write them at jcohen1@cox.net and ybhattac@aaas.org.

Two NASW members are now going casual, as they've left formal desk jobs: **Tony Fitzpatrick** is freelancing out of his St. Louis home after spending 22 years at Washington University in St. Louis. And **Katie Cottingham** is now freelancing out of New York. Before she was laid off with other news staff from the American Chemical Society, she won a "Tabbie"—an Honorable Mention award from the organization Trade, Association, and Business Publications International—for an online feature story about data sharing in proteomics that she wrote for the *Journal of Proteome Research*. Write to them at tonyfitzp@yahoo.com and kcottingham@jhu.edu to ask if they're wearing their pajamas.

They've long been stylists to the stars, but now the American Astronomical Society's **Stephen Maran** and **Richard Tresch Fienberg** are reporting some news of their own. Maran, a former NASA scientist who has managed the AAS press relations pro bono for a quarter of a century, is taking a new role as senior advisor to the executive officer. Fienberg will take over as AAS Press Officer and Education & Outreach Coordinator. He was previously AAS Deputy Press Officer and Visiting Scientist in Astronomy at Phillips Academy in Andover, Mass., as well as former editor in chief of *Sky & Telescope* magazine. Write to them at steve.maran@aas.org and rick.fienberg@aas.org.

Green is her color. **Barbara Ross** has been named director of the Department of Public Information at the South Florida Water Management District. This large government agency protects and manages water resources across 16 counties and is the federal government's partner in Everglades restoration. Write her at bwross@sfwmd.gov.

Rick Borchelt's new job is tailormade. He left Johns

Hopkins to become director of communications for the USDA's Office of Research, Education, and Economics—a new position created by the under secretary to raise the visibility of USDA science. Write him at rickb@nasw.org or rick.borchelt@osec.usda.gov.

Rita Baron-Faust is sporting a new look. She earned an MPH from Hunter College in May, and is venturing into the field of public health. After a two-year stint as a medical editor for the NYC Department of Health, she has joined the NYU Langone Medical Center as the program coordinator for its Reproductive Psychiatry Program. As part of her new job, she will devise and write educational programs for physicians and patients, as well as collaborate on research projects and academic papers. She plans to continue freelancing and speaking on women's health issues. Write her at baronfaust@aol.com.

Paul Raeburn is dressed for success. He's now the biology and medical blogger for the MIT Knight Science Journalism Tracker. He says he hopes to "track coverage with at least a bit of the insight and humor that Charlie Petit brings to the job as head tracker; he sets a very high standard." Write him at paulraeburn@nyc.rr.com.

Andrew Fraknoi has redefined travel chic. For designing a classroom activity where undergraduate students pretend to be travel agents to outer space, he was among the first group of writers to be named "Top Stars" in a new NASA-sponsored contest. The Top Stars contest is conducted by the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) in cooperation with the Space Telescope Science Institute, and invites U.S. educators to submit their best examples of using the Hubble Space Telescope in science, technology, engineering or mathematics education. Fraknoi, chair of the astronomy department at Foothill College in Los Altos Hills, Calif., has authored numerous books and articles on astronomy and astronomy education, and is a frequent guest on radio and TV programs where he translates astronomy news for a lay audience. Write him at fraknoiandrew@fhda.edu to find out whether it's appropriate to dress in layers when visiting the Crab Nebula.

Jack Williams' new book makes a statement. The University of Chicago Press and the American Meteorological Society published his latest book, *The AMS Weather Book: The Ultimate Guide to America's Weather*, in June. The book is intended in part for writers who are not particularly familiar with meteorology and who are working on stories about weather or climate. Parts of the book are available online at **http://www.amsweatherbook.com**—a tree-saving nod to eco-fashion. Write him at jwilliams@weatherjackwilliams.com.

She's a fashionable Fellow. **Cheryl Platzman Weinstock** has been selected as a 2009 National Press Foundation fellow to learn about cancer issues. This follows her selection as a MIT Knight Science Journalism Food Boot Camp fellow, as well as a Knight Fellow at the University of Maryland, both earlier this year. Write to her at cherylpw@optonline.net to find out which fellowship program is the best dressed.

Valerie Brown had no designs on winning the 2009 competition for explanatory journalism in print media from the Society of Environmental Journalists, but her article "Environment Becomes Heredity," published in *Miller-McCune* Magazine, took the top prize. The article dealt with the disturbing multi-generational effects of maternal and fetal chemical exposures. Congratulate her at vjb@valeriebrownwriter.com. ■

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Regional Groups

NEW ENGLAND

On April 14, members of the New England Science Writers (NESW) attended a live webinar on "Social Networks: The New Architecture of the Web." Members participated individually or in small groups at 19 sites in a trial partnership between NESW and Poynter's NewsU (**http://www.newsu.org**). Led by Paul Gillian, author of *The Secrets of Social Media Marketing*, the seminar examined social networking and offered ideas for how to adopt them as a foundation for reader communities.

NEW YORK

Science Writers in New York (SWINY) had an active summer planned, but an accident and prolonged rain led to the postponement of two events. Finally, on June 24, despite yet another downpour, a meeting was held for members and the public to share the latest information on swine influenza (H1N1) and discuss media coverage of the New York City outbreak. SWINY co-president David L. Levine organized the panel which included Doris Bucher, Ph.D., associate professor, department of microbiology and immunology, New York Medical College; Christine Gorman, formerly of *TIME* magazine, and now an independent journalist and blogger; and Jacob Goldstein, one of the principal writers of the *Wall Street Journal*'s Health Blog.

Bucher gave an overview of the new recombinant virus, the progress of vaccine development, and the public health implications of a worldwide pandemic. Her laboratory in Valhalla, N.Y., is one of just three worldwide that reproduces "seed" viruses for influenza vaccine, which begins the process of producing some 450 million doses of a new vaccine each year. Gorman and Goldstein both felt that the print media did a responsible job of addressing the outbreak, which affected New York City more than any other city in the country.

NORTH CAROLINA

Science Communicators of North Carolina (SCONC) celebrated a belated second birthday on Aug. 20 by attending a Durham Bulls minor league baseball game. With tickets arranged by Russ "Papa" Campbell of the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, and irrefutable documentary evidence provided by Ernie "El Presidente" Hood, more than two dozen SCONCs and family members came out for the show. The collective mojo was more than strong enough for the occasion, as the Bulls beat the Charlotte Knights 10-2. A surfeit of SCONCs ambled next door to Tyler's Taproom to celebrate the "birthday victory" in the proper fashion.

Spirits were high due, in part, to an influx of fresh ideas and new energy in the organization. Meeting in July, SCONC directors

CLANCY PHOTO COURTESY OF MARC LIEBERMAN

voted to expand the board and selected science writer Ernie Hood to be the group's first president. The expanded board met on Aug. 4 and mapped out monthly activities through May 2010. New SCONC board members include Cathy Clabby, associate editor of *American Scientist* magazine; David Kroll, chair of Pharmaceutical Sciences at NC Central University; Patric Lane, health and science editor at UNC News Services; Jennifer Weston, director of communication at the College of Engineering at NC State University; and Glenn Murphy, author of the bestseller *Why is Snot Green?* and the newly released *Stuff That Scares Your Pants Off!* They join continuing board members Campbell, Hood, Karl Leif Bates, Chris Brodie, Helen Chickering, and Anton Zuiker.

SAN DIEGO

On June 13, San Diego Science Writers Association (SANDSWA) members attended a program at the Museum of Making Music on "Harnessing Lightning: How Music Becomes Electric." The presentation described how pioneering developments in early telegraph, telephone, and analog technology were applied in the development of pickups, electric-signal processing, and amplification eventually leading to the achievement of fine control over electronic sound and tone. The speaker was Rick Turner, a musician who has worked extensively in the area between pure acoustic instruments and solid body electric guitars and basses. He was co-founder, in 1970, of Alembic, Inc., a company that spun off from the technical support team behind the Grateful Dead. Throughout Turner's discussion, musicians Patti Maxine and Bill Walker performed a repertoire of tunes that highlighted the transition from acoustic sound to electrified music. The Museum of Making Music (**http://www.museumofmakingmusic.org**) was founded in 1998 by the National Association of Music Manufacturers and explores the history of the American music products industry from its beginnings in the 1890s to today. ■

NASW Outreach and Diversity

BY VIKKI VALENTINE

As part of its ongoing outreach and diversity effort, the NASW membership committee explored several opportunities for recruitment aimed at fellow journalism associations (i.e., National Association of Black Journalists, National Association of Hispanic Journalists, Native American Journalists Association, and Asian American Journalists Association). The committee decided to focus this year's efforts on the Asian American Journalists Association national convention, in Boston. NASW member Charles Choi, also an AAJA board member with its New York chapter, volunteered to be our onsite representative.

AAJA was chosen, in part, because its agenda seemed to be the most forward thinking in terms of what's currently happening to journalism. With newspaper staffs decimated and a new wave of graduates looking for jobs, we were betting that conference attendance would be high as out-of-work and young journalists rely on networking more than ever. Also, the Boston location, with its heavy concentration of journalists in the New England corridor, promised a higher attendance in this recession year.

The convention drew nearly 700 registrants (about one-third of the AAJA membership) from print, television, radio, and online. Choi reports there were excellent panels on using technology and social media to build and engage audiences, how to report and tell stories on multiple platforms, tapping into communities that aren't covered at all to tell untold stories, how to run innovative newsrooms with fewer resources, how to take charge of your financial future, and how the *Detroit Free Press* recently won a Pulitzer for its rigorous investigative work on the city's mayor. The nights were lively too, with banquets enlivened by a dragon dance troupe, an Okinawan pop group, a visit by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke, and karaoke backed up by a live band.

Next year's NASW diversity outreach effort will again depend on the agendas planned by the various associations. All of this is leading up to the granddaddy of diversity conferences: UNITY.

UNITY is an alliance of the four national diversity associations—the Asian American Journalists Association, National Association of Black Journalists, National Association of Hispanic Journalists, and Native American Journalists Association. Together, UNITY represents more than 10,000 journalists of color. The conference is held every four years with the next one slated for Las Vegas in 2012.

One thing we learned from this year's effort, is that it would be better to send two NASW volunteers to work the recruitment booth. Choi found there was high interest from attendees in NASW, but he was unable to attend any of the conference sessions, with NASW losing out on strategies AAJA is adopting to help journalists weather the storm and adapt to the digital revolution.

Also, if any of NASW members attended other journalism conferences this year, please send your experiences to me at valentinevikki@gmail.com. The membership committee would love to know what you thought of the conferences and what you learned. ■

[NASW] decided to focus this year's efforts on the Asian American Journalists Association national convention...

NASW BOARD MEMBER VIKKI VALENTINE IS THE SUPERVISING DIGITAL EDITOR FOR SCIENCE AND HEALTH AT NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO.

AAJA CONVENTION LOGO COURTESY OF AAJA.ORG; FRIEDMANN PHOTO COURTESY OF KEN JACQUES

Science Writer Fellowships at The Huntington Library

NPR science correspondent Joe Palca and planetary scientist Carolyn Porco have been awarded The Huntington Library's Science Writer Fellowships.

Palca was science writer in residence from June through September 2009; Porco begins her fellowship at The Huntington in February 2010. The fellowship is made possible by an anonymous gift to The Huntington. The gift followed the opening of The Huntington's Dibner Hall of the History of Science, which features a permanent exhibition displaying history of science materials from The Huntington and the Burndy Library, a collection of 67,000 rare books and manuscripts given to The Huntington in 2006. ■

Lynne Friedmann Elected to Public Relations College of Fellows

BY PENDER M. MCCARTER

Lynne Friedmann and I have never met although we are both NASW members and our careers have involved promoting sci-tech literacy and diversity in the sci-tech profession. Our paths crossed in April when Lynne became a candidate for the Public Relations Society of America's College of Fellows—a honor earned in 20 years by only 2 percent of the PRSA's 22,000 members. Fellows are accredited professionals (APR) who have practiced or taught public relations for 20 or more years, demonstrated superior capability, exhibited personal and professional qualities that serve as a role model, and advanced the state of the profession.

I was honored to serve as chair of the College of Fellows in 2002. Most recently, I volunteered in a program to advise applicants on the process and how to put their best foot forward. I was fortunate to be matched with Lynne because of our shared interests in science communications and her obvious qualifications.

Lynne Friedmann

We exchanged e-mails and phone calls over a month's time. For Lynne, as for most applicants, the process is exhaustive. But it allows us to reflect on the impact of our careers.

You may not know about your magazine editor's contributions to the public relations profession and its leading professional society. A biologist and journalist by training, Lynne's career spans nearly 30 years during which her clients have included bioscience companies, university and nonprofit research institutions, and scientific professional associations. She has also been a tireless advocate on behalf of women in science, providing pro bono services for two decades to the Association for Women in Science (AWIS). She is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. For 10 years, NASW members saw her in action as moderator of the AAAS annual meeting news briefings.

Friedmann has advanced the profession of public relations through leadership in a number of science societies and as an advisor to government panels and agencies. She is also a past board member of NASW. As a mentor, she has supported the interests, aspirations, and careers of PR professionals and science writers around the country.

The 2009 College of Fellows induction ceremony takes place on Saturday, Nov. 7, during the PRSA International Conference, in San Diego. Lynne becomes one of only 466 PRSA Fellows nationwide. She will be recognized for "informing the public about scientific discoveries and also in educating scientists about public relations principles and strategic practice." I hope you will join me in congratulating Lynne on this capstone achievement. ■

NASW MEMBER PENDER M. MCCARTER, APR, FELLOW PRSA, IS SENIOR PR COUNSELOR FOR THE IEEE-USA, IN WASHINGTON, D.C. HE IS SEMI-RETIRED FOLLOWING A CAREER IN EDUCATION, JOURNALISM, AND PR.

CASW Awards Fellowships

Six CASW Traveling Fellowships of up to $1,200 each were awarded to help science writers defray the costs of attending the 2009 New Horizons in Science briefing in Austin, Texas. The fellowships assist journalists from publications and broadcast outlets that do not routinely cover major science meetings or employ a full-time science writer. CASW also assigns a veteran science writer to each fellow to serve as a mentor during the program.

The 2009 CASW Traveling Fellows are: **Katherine Gammon**, freelance, Santa Monica, Calif.; **Lisa Grossman**, freelance, Metuchen, N.J.; **Adam Hinterthuer**, freelance, Madison, Wis.; **Roberta Kwok**, freelance, Foster City, Calif.; **Jessica Robinson**, news director at Jefferson Public Radio, Ashland, Ore.; and **Eleanor Spicer**, freelance, Raleigh, N.C.

The 2009 New Horizons Traveling Fellowship Program was underwritten by a grant from the McCormick Foundation. ■

NASW Travel Fellowships

Fifteen science writers have been chosen to receive NASW Traveling Fellowships to this year's NASW Workshops, in Austin.

Laura Cassiday
Patty Dineen
Denise Gellene
Larry Krumenaker
David Levine
John Miller
Christopher Mims
Michelle Nijhuis
Susan Okie
Becky Oskin
Jeffrey Perkel
Lauren Rugani
Chelsea Wald
Wendy Wolfson
Deborah Wormser

The fellowships, totaling $13,500 were made possible through Authors Coalition funds received by NASW. ■

2009 Rennie Taylor/Alton Blakeslee Fellows Announced

The Council for the Advancement of Science Writing (CASW) has announced the recipients of this year's Rennie Taylor/Alton Blakeslee Graduate Studies Fellowships. The fellowships provide up to $2,000 for the academic year to both professional journalists and students of outstanding ability who have been accepted into graduate-level programs in science writing. The recipients are:

Ariel Ingram Bleicher, a graduate of the University of Alaska, now an intern at *Portland Monthly* magazine, who will attend NYU's Science, Health, and Environmental Reporting Program (SHERP).

Camille M. Carlisle, a Villanova University undergraduate, currently a legal secretary, who will attend the MIT graduate program in science writing.

Peggy Elizabeth Mihlelich, news and entertainment producer for Essence.com, who will attend the Columbia University graduate program in journalism.

David Zax, a Yale graduate and currently a freelance magazine writer, who will attend the Columbia University graduate program.

Support for this year's fellowships is The Brinson Foundation (**www.brinsonfoundation.org**). The fellowships honor the memory of Rennie Taylor, a science writer for *The Associated Press*, whose estate provided funds for the establishment of ATS, and Alton Blakeslee, AP science editor, who served as long-time president of ATS. Fellowship application and eligibility requirements can be found at **www.casw.org**. ■

In Memoriam

ScienceWriters has learned belatedly of the deaths of the following members.

■ ■ ■

Nechemia Meyers died in June 2008. A veteran Israeli-American journalist for decades, Meyers served for 32 years as publications director and spokesman for the Weizmann Institute of Science, in Israel. After his retirement in 1995, he continued as a freelance journalist writing articles on a wide variety of subjects for Jewish and general publications until just before his death. Meyers was born in Minneapolis, Minn., and moved to Los Angeles before emigrating to Israel in 1951. He spent his first years at a kibbutz collective village, and then worked for the Israeli government press office. In 1962 he moved to Rehovot, a city of 100,000 south of Tel Aviv, to take up his position at the Weizmann Institute. Meyers had been an NASW members since 1970.

■ ■ ■

Family members have informed NASW that **Lois Perry Meng**, died in February 2001. She had been an NASW member since 1961.

■ ■ ■

Family members have informed NASW that **Gene Liberty**, has died. He joined NASW in 1968. ■

CHANG PHOTO COURTESY OF KEVIN HARLIN

Alicia Chang inside the city wall of Xian, China

Evert Clark/Seth Payne Award

The winner of the 2009 Evert Clark/Seth Payne Award, an annual prize for young science journalists, is Alicia Chang, an *Associated Press* writer based in Los Angeles.

Chang received the award and its $1,000 prize for four stories: "Want scientific immortality? Name a sea worm," "Hospitals, doctors deal with swine flu jitters," "Death Valley works to preserve night sky," and "Climate change threatens Channel Islands artifacts."

The panel of judges cited Chang for her enterprising and well-organized stories on a variety of topics, and for an engaging style that used real people to tell stories.

The judges also awarded an honorable mention to Sam Kean for a collection of four stories: "What's an Element Got To Do to Get on the Periodic Table These Days?" (*Slate*); "Religiously transmitted diseases," (*Search*); "Woods Hole's Marine Lab seeks greater reach," (*The Chronicle Review*); and "Barcode of life," (*Search*). The judges cited Kean for his willingness to tackle tough topics and for his lively writing.

The award will be presented by the Evert Clark Fund and the National Association of Science Writers, in conjunction with the National Press Foundation. The ceremony takes place on Oct. 18 during the annual meeting of the National Association of Science Writers and the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing (CASW) in Austin, Texas.

Judges for the 2009 award were Susan Milius, writer at *Science News*; Peggy Girshman, editor of *Kaiser Health News*; Liz Pennisi, writer at *Science*; Marianne Lavelle, writer for the Center for Public Integrity; and David Lindley, author of such books as *Uncertainty: Einstein, Heisenberg, Bohr, and the Struggle for the Soul of Science and The End of Physics: The Myth of a Unified Theory.*

The Clark/Payne Award encourages young science writers by recognizing outstanding reporting in all fields of science. It is given each year in memory of journalists Ev Clark and Seth Payne, who offered friendship and advice to a generation of young reporters. This is the 20th year of the award.

All entrants must be age 30 or younger. The deadline for submissions is the end of June each year. For more information, contact the Evert Clark Award Fund or visit **http://www.mindspring.com/~us009848/.** ■

(Source: news release)

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Awards, Authors Coalition Liaison, Journalism Organizations, World Federation of Science Journalists, Education, FOIA, Freelance, Grievance, Internet, Membership, Workshop Committee

Complete contact information available at www.nasw.org

NEW MEMBERS

ARIZONA: Benjamin Landis, freelance, Scottsdale; Shalmali Pal, *Oncology News International*, Tucson; Michael Thomas*, Arizona State U., Tempe. **CALIFORNIA:** Ann King Filmer, UC Davis; Paula Goines*, UC Davis; David Lavine*, UC Davis; Susan Young*, UC Berkeley; Teisha Rowland*, UC Santa Barbara; Kris Rebillot, Buck Institute for Age Research, Novato; Padmini Rangamani*, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, Oakland; Kirsten Sanford, freelance, San Francisco; Jane Palmer*, UC Santa Cruz; Monya De*, UCLA. **COLORADO:** Jennifer Frazer, COMET, Boulder; Jessica Ann Roeder*, Metropolitan State College of Denver, Denver. **CONNECTICUT:** Abigail Jeffries, Articulate Communications, Tolland; Kathleen Palmer*, Williams College, Westport; Erika Schielke, Yale U. **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA:** Brittany Johnson*, Howard U.; David Taylor, David Taylor Communications. **FLORIDA:** Kayla Causey*, Florida Atlantic U., Boca Raton. **GEORGIA:** Kathleen Frey*, U. of Georgia, Athens; Jordan Sarver*, U. of Georgia, Athens. **ILLINOIS:** Kara Rogers, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., Chicago; Marisa Naujokas, Environmental Health Consulting, Evanston. **INDIANA:** Brian Wallheimer, Purdue U., West Lafayette. **LOUISIANA:** Chris Holdgraf*, Tulane U., New Orleans. **MASSACHUSETTS:** Sara Cody*, U. of Mass., Amherst; Jennifer MacArthur, freelance, Burlington; Baldur Hedinsson*, Boston U., Cambridge; Jennifer Leslie*, MIT, Cambridge; Nidhi Subbaraman*, MIT Graduate Program in Science Writing. **MARYLAND:** Sujata Gupta*, The Johns Hopkins Univ., Baltimore; Mandy Kendrick, freelance, Silver Spring; Annmarie Emmet Leadman, Aeras Global TB Vaccine Foundation, Rockville; Gwyneth Dickey*, U. of Maryland, Bowie; Meg Marquardt, The Johns Hopkins Univ.; Michael Newman, Nat'l Inst. of Standards and Tech., Gaithersburg; Jamie Rosen, Aeras Global TB Vaccine Foundation, Rockville. **MICHIGAN:** Jill Granger, freelance, Ann Arbor; Raghu Kainkaryam*, U. of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Diane Swanbrow, U. of Michigan, Ann Arbor. **NEW HAMPSHIRE:** David Lukofsky, Hanover. NEW JERSEY: Bridget Wells, Jonathan Wood & Associates, Westwood. **NEW YORK:** Hema Bashyam, Cold Spring Harbor Lab., Cold Spring Harbor; Lauren Bertin*, Bennington College, Bronx; Josephine Hearn*, Columbia U. Grad. School of Journalism, NYC; Lisa Jarvis, *Chemical & Engineering* News, Brooklyn; Frederik Joelving*, NYU, Brooklyn; James Bryan Lowder*, Columbia U., NYC; Tuan Nguyen*, C.U.N.Y, NYC; Laura Shin, freelance, NYC; Carina Storrs*, NYU; Michael Weiss*, NYU; Ruth Williams, freelance, NYC; Laura Wood, Fine Print Literary Management, NYC; Shara Yurkiewicz, freelance, Woodmere. **NORTH CAROLINA:** Stephanie Worley Firley, U.S. Forest Service, Asheville; Eleanor Spicer*, NC State U., Raleigh; Elsa Youngsteadt, Sigma Xi, Durham. **OREGON:** Christopher Spitzer, freelance, Portland. **PENNSYLVANIA:** Darlene Cavalier, ScienceCheerleader.com, Philadelphia; Jennifer Dionisio, Chem. Heritage Fnd., Philadelphia; Meredith Hegg*, Temple U., Clifton Heights; Preyanka Makadia*, Philadelphia Coll. of Osteopathic Med., Bensalem; Deborah Stern Silver, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Philadelphia; Dustin Grinnell*, Penn. State U.; Bella, Nadler*, U. of Pittsburgh; Katrina Voss, Penn. State U.; Theresa Wizemann, Wizemann Scientific Communications, LLC, Doylestown. **RHODE ISLAND:** Mary Bates*, Brown U., Providence; Nicholas Diakopoulos, Rutgers U., East Greenwich. **TENNESSEE:** Catherine Crawley, Nat'l Inst. for Mathematical & Biol. Sciences (NIMBIOS), Knoxville; Gregory Jones, Oak Ridge Nat'l Lab, Knoxville; James Pearce, Oak Ridge Nat'l Lab, Oak Ridge. **TEXAS:** Margaret Allen, So. Methodist U., Dallas; Leah Hesla*, U. of Texas at Austin. **VIRGINIA:** Steven Mackay, Vir. Tech. Coll. of Eng., Blacksburg. **WASHINGTON:** Mark Clemens, Intellectual Ventures, Bellevue; Rani Iyer, freelance, Pullman; Chris Tachibana, freelance, Seattle. **WISCONSIN:** Yun Zhao*, Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison. **CANADA:** Stephen Dougherty*, McGill Univ., Montreal. **GERMANY:** Marc Schneider*, Max Planck Inst. of Biophysical Chem., Goettingen. **QATAR:** Emily Alp, Weill Cornell Med. Coll., Qatar, Doha. ■
**Student member*

JOB MARKET

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the *Washington Post*. During his first full summer vacation since the eighth grade, Bruzelius explored a number of options. In September he took the post of executive editor at the Environmental Working Group, a D.C.-based research and advocacy group. "I have skills and insights useful for communicating to the public about science," Bruzelius said. "Everybody is talking about one thing: It's no longer the old model where if you have a story to tell, you go to a reporter at a newspaper, wire service, or major paper." At EWG, Bruzelius works alongside another former journalist, Elaine Shannon, who had a long career at *TIME* and *Newsweek*.

Another former *Washington Post* journalist, Rick Weiss, spent nine months as a senior fellow at the think tank Center for American Progress where he immersed himself in science blogging. Then came an e-mail asking: Have you ever considered public service? "I thought, 'Now is the time,'" Weiss texted from his Blackberry. In April, Weiss joined The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy in April as assistant director of strategic communications and senior science policy analyst.

"The possibility of working on science and technology policy in an Administration that really 'gets science' was intriguing, even exciting," he said. Weiss didn't want to work solely as a flack, though he was willing to do so part-time for the right cause. He was able to create a position that is half communications and half policy work. It gives him access to the fascinating, if Byzantine and sometimes frustrating, world of federal science, technology, and R&D policymaking. "I am working harder and longer hours than I've ever worked in my life," he said.

Over on the Hill, Paul Thacker works as an investigator for Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA). Thacker revels in his role as watchdog shedding light on hidden or improper financial relationships between doctors and drug companies. "I feel much more effective now," said Thacker, who resigned from the American Chemical Society after his investigative reporting raised hackles internally and prompted one angry ACS board member to characterize Thacker's reporting as "anti-industry." Thacker's work for Grassley has changed national policies about the relationship between physicians and companies, he said.

Rick Borchelt also likes being in a position to make a difference in government policy and to ensure the public knows where their tax dollars went. He'll have plenty of opportunity to do just that in his new job as communications director to the chief science officer for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. At the start of summer, Borchelt lost his favorite part of the job when the Center for Genetics and Public Policy, at Johns Hopkins, parted ways with the Pew Charitable Trusts in the foundation's transition to move projects in-house. The Pew money has supported "cool things like policy reports, Hill briefings, and policy seminars," Borchelt said.

On the communications side, it's not a rosy picture, but Borchelt and others report that there are jobs out there. Elizabeth Thomson advises looking for communications jobs at universities. That's exactly what she did when her job overseeing science and engineering news at MIT was cut in June. In a lateral move that barely interrupted her 22-year career, Thomson became associate director of communications in the MIT development office.

Former WBUR health and science reporter Allan Coukell not only survived his project's move this year to Pew, he received a promotion. Two years ago, the trained pharmacist returned to his roots, where he now directs the Pew Prescription Project, a prescription drug policy and advocacy initiative. Coukell is frequently quoted in stories about the need for tighter regulation of conflicts of interest created by the extensive financial ties between doctors and drug companies.

In the process of writing a book about how scientists can explain their work to their audiences, Dennis Meredith, the former director of research communications at Duke University, launched his own publishing business from the wooded mountains of North Carolina. His advice for science writers who see their future as book authors and want to self publish is posted on the NASW website.

"Basically," he said, "don't do it unless you have money, time, and a target audience you can persuade to buy your book." When it comes to making a living, "the book is only a centerpiece of a broader career," he said. "You have to think of yourself as an information industry. You have to find a productive niche with enough customers that pay enough." ■

WINNERS

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a scientist at the National Institutes of Health, an author, and a physician; Sandra Blakeslee, a science correspondent for the *New York Times* and a book author; and Sharon Dunwoody, Evjue-Bascom Professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The Science in Society awards committee was chaired by Robert Finn, San Francisco Bureau Chief for the International Medical News Group. In addition to the final committee, NASW thanks the volunteers who served on preliminary screening committees: Jill Adams (freelance), Catherine Clabby (*American Scientist*), Pauline Davies (Arizona State University), Linda Doran (freelance), Robert Finn (International Medical News Group), Barbara Hyde (American Society for Microbiology), Doug Levy (23andMe), Robin Lloyd (Imaginova Corp.), Merry Maisel (freelance), Margaret McDonald (University of Pittsburgh), Thomas Paulson (freelance), Neal Singer (Sandia National Laboratories), Rabiya Tuma (freelance), Cheryl Weinstock (freelance), and Mitch Zoler (International Medical News Group).

Entries for next year's competition, for material published or broadcast in 2009, are due Feb. 1, 2010. Entry forms will be available in January at **www.nasw.org**. ■

(source: news release)

MEDIA

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harsh treatment of scientists working in sensitive areas such as climate science and reproductive health.

Agencies' attempts to build walls between researchers and journalists were but one aspect of the problem. The Union of Concerned Scientists' website *The A to Z Guide to Political Interference in Science* (of which I am a contributing editor) documents distortion, suppression, and misuse of science in all corners of the government. Some of the most egregious cases involved climate science, where Bush Administration appointees seemed determined to bend science to fit political goals.

Communications between federal scientists and journalists started to improve after climate guru James Hansen went public with accusations that he was being "muzzled" by NASA. A few other prominent climate scientists also spoke out. Science writers including Andy Revkin of the *New York Times* helped bring attention to the problem by covering these incidents in major newspapers.

In 2006 NASA revised its media policy to emphasize its "commitment to open…dialogue with the public" and make clear that NASA scientists may speak freely with the media. The following year the U.S. Department of Commerce, which oversees the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), issued a new media policy modeled on NASA's, which the Union of Concerned Scientists called "a step in the right direction."

The Union of Concerned Scientists gave the Center for Disease Control a high grade on its media policy. In practice, though, the agency did not always meet the policy's high standards. A CDC scientist said that "with highly charged issues the agency has buckled to political pressure" in spite of good media policies.

By the time the Association of Health Care Journalists sent a letter in March urging the Obama Administration to end the practice of making reporters go through public affairs offices to arrange interviews, some of the worst policies had already been improved, at least on paper.

During interviews for the Union of Concerned Scientists reports, I heard several scientists say that public affairs offices provided an important service. Many scientists don't like to deal with the public or the media or aren't very skilled at it, and they are grateful to have professionals doing that job. Scientists wanted control over their message (no one should be changing wording in a way that alters the meaning of the science) and wanted the option to communicate directly with media when desired (no public affairs officer should be saying that a scientist is unavailable for an interview as a means of suppressing that scientist's research results). From the scientists' perspective, the problem was not so much the existence of public affairs offices as their motive: message control, or assisting scientists to get their information out in a professional manner?

Federal agencies are tremendous bureaucracies difficult to change overnight, but President Obama has actively set a tone from the top that supports openness in communication with government scientists. He has also emphasized respect for science, and a determination to make science, rather than politics, the basis for his administration's decisions. All of this should encourage managers at federal science-based agencies to improve the flow of information to journalists. ■

Corrections

In "Facebook and Procrastination" (*SW*, summer 2009) author's information incorrectly identified Earle Holland. He is assistant vice president for research communications at Ohio State University.

In "Books By and For Members" (*SW*, summer 2009) an obsolete e-mail address and incorrect area code are given for author Ken Frazier. He can be reached at kendrickfrazier@comcast.net or 505-828-1958.

TAX ADVICE

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Keen allows callers to check out advisors' backgrounds and their ratings by previous customers. Another confidence booster is that Keen makes the call to both parties—ensuring that its online oracles are clueless about callers' names, phone numbers, and other personal information, unless the callers choose to divulge such details.

What does a service like this cost, and how does one pay? As with most Internet sites, Keen accepts credit cards and bills per minute, but frequently discounts fees for first timers. There is no minimum fee commitment and callers decide when to conclude the conversations, so they are in control at all times. The result is helpful advice at far less than the cost of in-person sessions.

Keen is particularly useful during tax filing season when other advice lines may be overloaded. According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), taxpayers trying to dial into the IRS telephone assistance system for comparable help may be stymied by busy signals or put on "hold" only to endure lengthy waits. But Keen's advisors offer prompt answers.

Throw in another plus for last-minute filers choosing Keen over the IRS: They improve their chances for obtaining advice on circumventing stiff, nondeductible penalties for late filing (as much as 25 percent of the balance due on a return submitted after the due date) and late payment. The IRS charges interest on penalties and back taxes. Whereas taxpayers can count on Keen's availability on April 15, that is the day when "abandoned calls"—the GAO's term for calls to IRS telephones that go unanswered—surge. And, in case you forgot, that is also the day the Titanic sank.

To contact Keen, go to **www.keen.com**, or call 1-800-ASK-KEEN (275-5336). If you log on to the website and browse its directory of tax advisers, you can select one by clicking on a "Call Now" icon. Or you can follow the voice prompts in the case of the 800-number. That may be all it takes to speak with someone who can staunch the hemorrhaging to the IRS. ■

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It's That Time of Year

Membership Renewal

All NASW memberships expire on December 31 (including yours). Log in to www.nasw.org and renew online beginning November 16. Avoid a late fee by renewing before January 31.

The Authors Coalition Survey is now part of the online renewal process. A few minutes of your time translates into crucial funding for NASW programs that benefit science writers.

National Association of Science Writers
www.nasw.org

See page 17 for details