ScienceWriters™

National Association of Science Writers, Inc.

Fall 2012

THE THEN AND NOW OF REPORTING ON
SPACE EXPLORATION

THE CURRENT
STATE
OF SCIENCE WRITING

CHANGES AT THE KNIGHT
TRACKER

SCIENCE IN SOCIETY
AWARDS

VICTOR COHN
EXCELLENCE
IN MEDICAL WRITING AWARD

BOARD ELECTION
RESULTS

TAX ADVANTAGES OF EMPLOYING
NEXT OF KIN

ScienceWriters™
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From The Editor

I have numerous opportunities to speak to young people exploring career options, to counsel professionals looking to make a shift to science writing, and to instruct scientists wishing to better communicate their research findings to the public.

In every instance, these engagements end with everybody going home with a copy of ScienceWriters. *It's better than a business card.*

Which bring me to this issue of the magazine: In its pages are stories on an exciting, new organization to support the work of freelance writers, a spotlight on the best in science writing (Science in Society, Victor Cohn awards), a slew of new member services and benefits, the newly elected NASW board, a challenging look at the current state of science writing, as well as space news coverage in today's social-media era contrasted to the go-go years of the 1960s.

Through ScienceWriters, *I look forward to keeping members informed, and to introducing a wider audience to myriad facets of our profession and to all that NASW has to offer.* ■

Lynne Friedmann

In This Issue

FRIEDMANN COURTESY OF KEN JACQUES; MONTAGE USING CANDIDS BY NANCY SHUTE WITH NATIONAL PRESS BUILDING AND LOGO COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

The election of the NASW board was held September 4, at The National Press Club, in Washington. Among faces you'll recognize: Steve Maran, Patrice Pages, Barbara Hyde, Ivan Amato, and Beryl Benderly, and Gail Porter.

Election Results

NASW is pleased to announce the results of the recent election for the 2012-14 board. Thank you to each of the candidates who ran in the election and to all who voted.

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NASW offers heartfelt thanks to its four "retiring" board members who did not run for re-election: Terry Devitt, Dan Ferber, Robin Lloyd, and Adam Rogers. Each will continue to be involved with other NASW and science writing activities, and we are grateful for their many combined years of service. A special "thank you" to outgoing president Nancy Shute who has served NASW in a series of capacities since her election to the board more than a decade ago. She has kept us humming along and imparted energy and enthusiasm throughout her years of service.

Finally, thanks to the nominating committee of Nancy Shute (chair), Karl Bates, Mariette DiChristina, Lee Hotz, Maryn McKenna, and Carl Zimmer who put together an incredible slate of candidates. ■

**All seven incumbents were re-elected. The new board will take office starting Oct. 26 when it meets in Raleigh, N.C., at the kickoff of ScienceWriters2012.*

The Food & Environment Reporting Network

A new media outlet for freelancers

BY MARYN MCKENNA

On July 11, 2012, an investigation I had worked on for approximately six months appeared simultaneously on TheAtlantic.com, Good Morning America, and ABC News' World News Tonight. ■ I am a freelancer.

The Food & Environment Reporting Network, Inc. (FERN), commissions work from an array of freelancers, whose work it subsequently markets to traditional media outlets. FERN's focus is on food, agriculture, and environmental health specifically because these subjects touch our lives every day in profound ways.

If you know anything about the freelance marketplace, you'll spot at once that those two sentences don't go together. Freelancers, regardless of the quality of their work, do not routinely find the money to support months of independent research, and people who are not staff reporters do not commonly end up on network news, let alone in a multi-platform project co-published with the website of a major magazine.

That my project ended up in so many places at once is due in part to the innate newsworthiness of the story, which drew a connection between antibiotic use in agriculture, chicken, and rising drug resistance in urinary tract infections. But it is due much more to the creativity and tenacity of an almost two-year-old organization that was founded to support writers like me and many other NASW members: Experienced freelancers who have spotted a story that needs a deep dive, but do not have the funding to pursue it or editorial connections to get it showcased.

The group is the Food & Environment Reporting Network, Inc. (**thefern.org**), a nonpartisan nonprofit started in late 2010 by former staff reporters and longtime freelancers who knew from their own work lives—and from talking to friends and colleagues—that excellent stories were going unpublished.

MARYN MCKENNA IS A COLUMNIST AND CONTRIBUTING EDITOR FOR *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN*, A BLOGGER FOR *WIRED*, A MAGAZINE JOURNALIST, AND THE AUTHOR OF *SUPERBUG: THE FATAL MENACE OF MRSA* AND *BEATING BACK THE DEVIL*. SHE IS WORKING ON A SECOND PROJECT FOR FERN.

"We started talking initially at a conference, over beers," says Sam Fromartz, a former Reuters business editor, freelancer, and author of *Organic, Inc*. (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006) who is FERN's editor-in-chief. "We knew there were really talented people out there who were trying to write about food, agriculture and environmental issues, but weren't finding the support that would enable them to do the reporting."

The group formed a board, recruited a separate editorial board (members include former *Gourmet* editor-in-chief Ruth Reichl and former *WIRED* editor-in-chief Katrina Heron) and sought funding. The first grants were small, Fromartz said—hand-to-mouth funding, at about $10,000 a time, but enough to pay lean bills while the group applied to big foundations. They were successful; their funding sources now include the 11th Hour Project (backed by the Schmidt Family Foundation), the McKnight Foundation, Clarence Heller Charitable Foundation, Columbia Foundation, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

With the decay of the mainstream media, foundation-funded journalism has become common. The most notable examples are the investigative powerhouses ProPublica, backed by the Sandler Foundation; the Center for Investigative Journalism; and Center for Public Integrity. Smaller outfits range from regionally specific publications such as the Texas Tribune, VoiceofSanDiego.org, and California Watch, to health-news sites in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and others. But most of those sites have used their grants in part to hire permanent reporting staff. FERN, like the Investigative Fund at the Nation Institute, is one of a handful that commissions work from an array of freelancers, whose work it subsequently markets to traditional media outlets. Among its hits so far: *High Country News*, MSNBC (since renamed NBCNews.com), *Washington Post*, *The Nation*, *American Prospect*, in addition to *The Atlantic*, and ABC News. Placements with additional major media are in the pipeline.

Fromartz emphasizes that FERN is not a grant making organization, giving reporters funds to go out and explore a topic. Rather it is a media organization, commissioning stories, pitches them to partners, and getting pieces published or broadcasted.

"There was a real question in my mind whether we could achieve liftoff, but now I do feel this is sustainable," Fromartz says. "We have shown we can deliver great stories and we can attract reputable media partners. That means we can demonstrate to writers that they will get to work with quality editors, and their stories will have impact. And as a result, we're getting really great pitches."

Pay arrangements vary by project: If a story is going to a single outlet, the reporter may be paid directly by the publication; for multi-platform projects such as mine, the reporter may be paid by FERN. (I was.)

"The pay depends on the story and on what the media partner is bringing to the table," Fromartz says, "But we aim for competitive rates."

For complex projects, FERN also offers "research commissions" that usually run around $1,000. At the end of that process, the writer should have a polished pitch that is strong enough to stand up to scrutiny by FERN's own editors followed by editors at its eventual landing place.

In exchange for that decent pay rate, FERN is looking for stories that are original and will have impact: Its previous hits this year have included investigations of how the government crop insurance program props up insurance companies, how dairy farming imperils groundwater, and how a drug that is routinely fed to U.S. livestock has become so controversial that its use prevents U.S. meat from being sold in many countries.

"We want food, agriculture, and environmental health," Fromartz says, "But those encompass such a broad range that, we're open to anything as long as it relates to our core areas. Our entire mission is to do stories that other media are ignoring, but it still has to resonate with us and with the media we are marketing to."

…people out there who were trying to write about food, agriculture, and environmental issues, but weren't finding the support they would enable them to do the reporting.

To pitch FERN successfully, Fromartz urges reading the website thoroughly, and then sending a short pitch—200 words, max—through the submission engine on the site's "Contact Us" page (**thefern.org/contact**). For now, projects must be U.S.-based; the group's funding doesn't yet extend to international travel. And while the stories FERN has placed so far have foregrounded print (with one multi-media slideshow), he is open to other media too. "We have radio partners who are looking for pitches," Fromartz says, and FERN is also considering data analysis and graphic story presentations. ■

2012 Science in Society Awards

The winners are:

Book
Seth Mnookin
Panic Virus: A True Story of Medicine, Science, and Fear
(Simon & Schuster)

In *Panic Virus*, Mnookin tells the story of the dire consequences of the 1998 publication of a subsequently discredited paper alleging that the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine might cause autism. One judge commented that Mnookin "neatly dissects the issues behind the anti-vaccine movement, illuminating this intersection of science, politics, and public health. The story is beautifully told, the people in it are compellingly rendered, and the missteps on all sides of the vaccine question told in clear detail. In the end, the book offers both a telling look at how human beings can complicate even the most straightforward attempts to protect public health and a warning of the risks to all of us when we choose fear-mongering over good science."


Science Agenda

Ban Chimp Testing

Why it is time to end invasive biomedical research on chimpanzees

Commentary or Opinion
***Scientific American* Board of Editors**
"Ban Chimp Testing" (*Scientific American*)

"Ban Chimp Testing" appeared in the October 2011 issue of *Scientific American*. The board of editors covers the current status of invasive experiments on chimpanzees and their grim impact on the animals, and outlines the arguments that it is no longer scientifically productive or moral to continue such testing. The commentary also outlines the components of a future policy to protect the animals. One judge called the commentary "a terrific example of clear reporting and social advocacy," saying that the essay "captures the enduring plight of our closest living relatives and offers sober advice on how to help them."

Science Reporting
Jim Morris, Chris Hamby,
Ronnie Greene, Elizabeth Lucas, Emma Schwartz
(Center for Public Integrity's iWatch News)
Elizabeth Shogren, Howard Berkes, Sandra Bartlett,
John Poole, Robert Benincasa (NPR)
"Poisoned Places"

The "Poisoned Places" series was published on the Center for Public Integrity's iWatch News and broadcast on NPR during November and December 2011. The series covers how toxic air pollution continues to harm communities throughout the nation 21 years after Congress passed an amendment to the Clean Air Act to curb that pollution. The authors reveal how the Environmental Protection Agency maintained a secret "watch list" of some 400 facilities refineries, steel mills, incinerators, cement kilns, and pharmaceutical plants that continue to release pollutants that cause cancer and brain damage. One judge called the series "a revealing and dismaying look at the failures of environmental protection agencies to actually do their job of protecting the American people. The power of the series is partly in the detailed and comprehensive research that reveals a seriously flawed system," said the judge. "But it gains additional power from its creative use of multiple platforms to tell the story and innovative story-telling."

MNOOKIN BY SARA JAMES; MAGAZINE COURTESY OF SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, A DIVISION OF NATURE AMERICA, INC.; MORRIS, HAMBY, GREENE, LUCAS, AND SCHWARTZ COURTESY OF THE CENTER FOR PUBLIC INTEGRITY



Science Reporting for a Local or Regional Audience
Emilene Ostlind, Mary Ellen Hannibal, Cally Carswell
"Perilous Passages" (*High Country News*)

The "Perilous Passage" series was published in *High Country News* on December 26, 2011. Reported by Emilene Ostlind and Mary Ellen Hannibal and photographed by Joe Riis, the series covers scientists' struggles to understand and protect the long-distance migrations of Western wildlife, including the pronghorn antelope. The series explains how migrations are hindered by man-made barriers such as fences and roads and how they can be encouraged by the establishment of wildlife corridors. It details the economic, governmental, and political issues that affect establishment of such corridors. One judge called the series "a gripping and vividly written feature story about the pronghorns' amazing long-distance migration through several states in the Northwest." The series "highlights the difficulties that wildlife have in surviving an increasingly congested and fenced-in ecosystem. Both the writing and the photos kept my interest from beginning to end."

■ ■ ■

The 2012 Science in Society Journalism Awards are sponsored by the NASW. Winners in each category share a cash prize of $2,500, awarded at a reception on Oct. 27, during the ScienceWriters2012 meeting, in Raleigh, N.C.

The final judging committee consisted of Alison Bass, author and assistant professor of journalism at West Virginia University; Deborah Blum, author and professor of journalism at University of Wisconsin-Madison; and Sandra Blakeslee, author and science correspondent for the *New York Times*. The Science in Society awards committee was chaired by Amber Dance, a freelance journalist and science writer for the Alzheimer Research Forum, and Dennis Meredith, a freelance science writer and communication consultant.

In addition to the final committee, NASW thanks the volunteers who served on the preliminary screening committees: Christie Aschwanden (freelance), Glennda Chui (SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory), Lynne Friedmann (freelance), Robin Lloyd (*Scientific American*), Robin Marantz Henig (contributing writer, *The New York Times Magazine*), Roberta Kwok (freelance), Maryn McKenna (freelance), Julie Ann Miller (freelance), Steve Mirsky (*Scientific American*), Christine Peterson (*Casper Star-Tribune*), Charlie Petit (freelance and Knight Science Journalism Tracker),

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Jon Cohen of *Science* Magazine To Receive Victor Cohn Medical Science Reporting Prize

Jon Cohen, a contributing correspondent for *Science* magazine, has been named recipient of the 2012 Victor Cohn Prize for Excellence in Medical Science Reporting.

The award is made in recognition of exemplary coverage of a broad range of biomedical topics, but most notably Cohen's distinguished and persistent chronicling of the global HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The Cohn Prize judges lauded Cohen for his "exceptional resourcefulness, his unrelenting enterprise, his brilliant marshaling of facts, and his superb story-telling skills," in articles dealing with such diverse issues as chronic fatigue syndrome, the H5N1 avian influenza pandemic, primate medical research, vaccines and immunology, emerging infectious diseases, and biodefense.


Jon Cohen

Judges were particularly impressed by the in-depth packages of stories Cohen published in *Science* in advance of the major international biennial HIV/AIDS meetings. Each set covered a different corner of the globe. In the most recent package, "The Many States of HIV in America," in the July 12 issue, Cohen described, efforts underway to better understand and stem the spread of HIV in 10 cities across the United States. Earlier packages examined the daunting challenges faced in Eastern Europe, in Latin America, and the Caribbean and, before that, in Asia and Africa.

Colin Norman, news editor of *Science,* wrote in his nominating letter:

> Jon's reporting on the AIDS epidemic consistently breaks new ground….Each package highlights Jon's great strengths as a reporter: He gets into the field and talks to everybody, from top researchers and government officials to sex workers, injecting drug users, non-governmental groups, men who have sex with men, patients, law enforcement, and advocates. He is meticulous in his reporting and his writing is vivid and compelling.

Jon Cohen began writing for *Science* in 1990, first as a staff writer and since 1998 as a contributing correspondent. His freelance work also has appeared in many popular outlets including the *New Yorker*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *New York Times Magazine*, *Washington Post*, *Smithsonian*, and *Discover*. Author of three books,

COHN PRIZE continued on page 32

SHOGREN AND POOLE BY DOBY PHOTOGRAPHY; BENINCASA BY KATIE BURK/NPR; OSTLIND BY STEPHANIE OGBURN; COHEN BY MALCOLM LINTON

Mars Curiosity Rover Landing Goes Viral

BY ROBERT LEE HOTZ

For seven exhilarating minutes this past August, the newsroom at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory crackled with the human electricity of telepresence. In those moments, hundreds of reporters, jammed elbow-to-elbow, were joined by a global audience drawn directly into the heartbeat of a breaking-news event.

"We were packed like sardines in the converted JPL museum, clanking away on our laptops," recalled Associated Press science reporter Alicia Chang. "Space was so tight that it felt like every seat was the middle seat of an airplane. After hearing 'touchdown confirmed,' the room was abuzz with reporters filing to get the first word out."

The Curiosity landing mobilized a media flash mob.

Imaginative coverage gathered millions of people worldwide who tuned in remotely for the drama of a robot landing on Mars 154 million miles away. It was instant, transparent, and participatory. In this sense, the Mars landing was a media moment that highlighted the convergence of traditional and new multimedia ways of science coverage.

Officially, 400 reporters from about 100 media outlets came to JPL in the foothills of Pasadena and La Cañada Flintridge on the evening of Aug. 5 to cover the landing of NASA's $2.5 billion Curiosity rover. Some media outlets that had covered previous Mars landings, such as *USAToday*, *Houston Chronicle*, *San Jose Mercury News*, and *San Francisco Chronicle*, were absent. Newer media sites like Boing Boing, Gizmodo, RedOrbit.com, and UniverseToday.com took seats vacated by layoffs and budget cuts at more old-line news outlets.

"There were a lot of new faces in the media here," said news chief Jane Platt, at JPL's media relations office.

There also were new demands on the JPL staff of about a dozen public affairs specialists. In the 10 days that the JPL newsroom was formally open for landing coverage, Platt and her colleagues fielded more than a thousand interview requests. They also fielded a new wave of multimedia and social media demands. "Reporters have a broader portfolio of things they have to do. When they come now, they bring multiple needs and requests," Platt said. "We were immensely busy."

The science reporters that night at JPL reached out to their audiences through almost every multimedia tool available and on every media platform, from print, video, and interactive blogs, to Facebook, YouTube, Google+, and Twitter.

"We're not just pencil-pushing print reporters anymore," said veteran aerospace reporter Todd Halvorson, who covered the landing for *Florida Today* and the Gannett chain of 83 newspapers and 23 television stations. It was his fourth Mars landing, but the first for which he was accompanied by a videographer.

ROBERT LEE HOTZ IS THE SCIENCE COLUMNIST FOR THE *WALL STREET JOURNAL*

As Curiosity braked through the thin Martian atmosphere, Halvorson was live online conducting an interactive blog with readers as far away as South Africa, while also taking notes for his paper's more conventional breaking news bulletins and video stories. In the run-up to the landing, he had already filed a 30-minute video documentary, two in-depth Sunday feature stories, and a stream of daily updates.

The Curiosity landing mobilized a media flash mob.

All told, the Curiosity landing generated more than 10,000 news stories and blog reports. Those numbers, though, don't adequately describe the rolling boil of moment-to-moment coverage of the Curiosity landing.

For Alan Boyle, digital science editor for NBCnews.com, who writes the Cosmic Log blog, the steady stream of updates blurred media formats into one unified information flow. "The story of the landing was continuously updated on our story page," he said." You wrote the story however it is best told, whether it is a news story, a blog posting, or a Twitter stream. They blend together nowadays."

Covering the landing for the *Wall Street Journal*, I shared that overcrowded JPL newsroom not just with other science reporters scrambling on deadline, but with online readers, Twitter followers, streaming video viewers, radio listeners, LinkedIn connections, Skype callers, Reddit questioners, and Google+ participants.

By JPL's own accounting, the Curiosity landing generated 1.2 billion Twitter messages, 17.4 million Facebook hits, 3.7 million YouTube downloads, 36.4 million webcast streams, and, during minutes of the landing itself, 3.2 million viewers on Ustream.tv—more than the combined audiences of the cable news outlets.

In a very real way, readers were not just looking over my shoulder at my computer screen, but were in my pocket with my smartphone. In a sense, they were holding my pen

CURIOSITY

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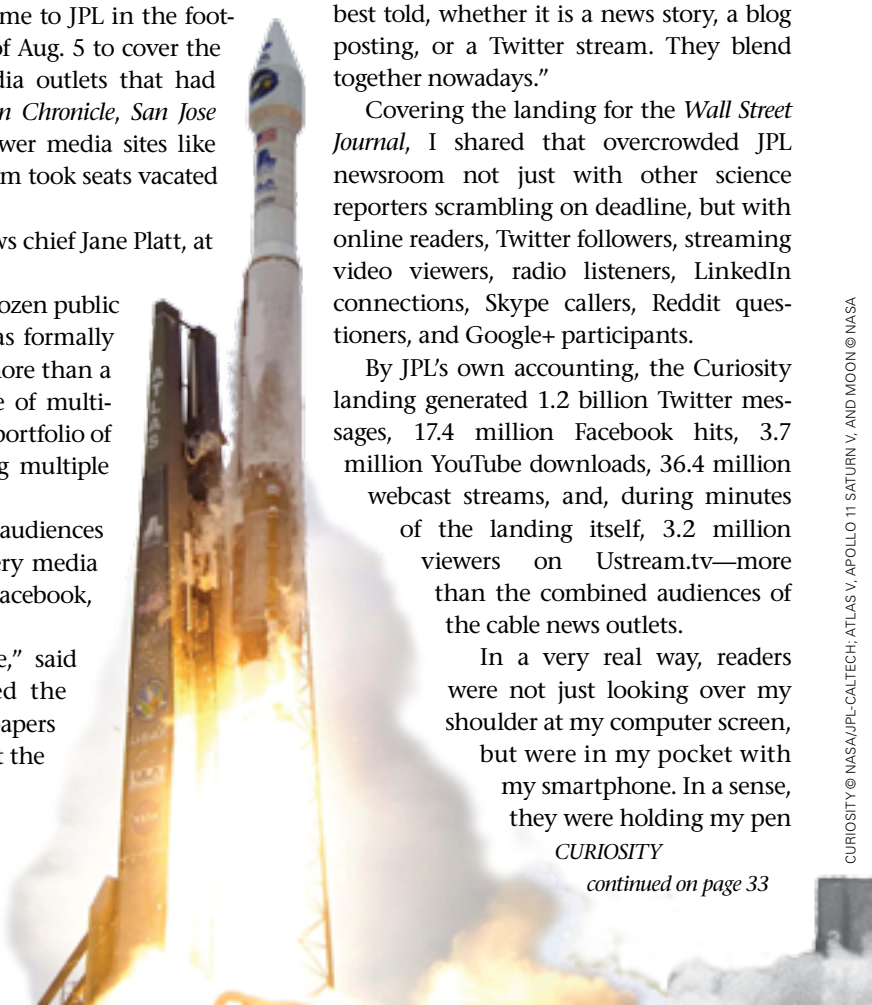


CURIOSITY © NASA/JPL-CALTECH; ATLAS V, APOLLO 11 SATURN V, AND MOON © NASA

What I Saw at the Mid-Century Launch Pad

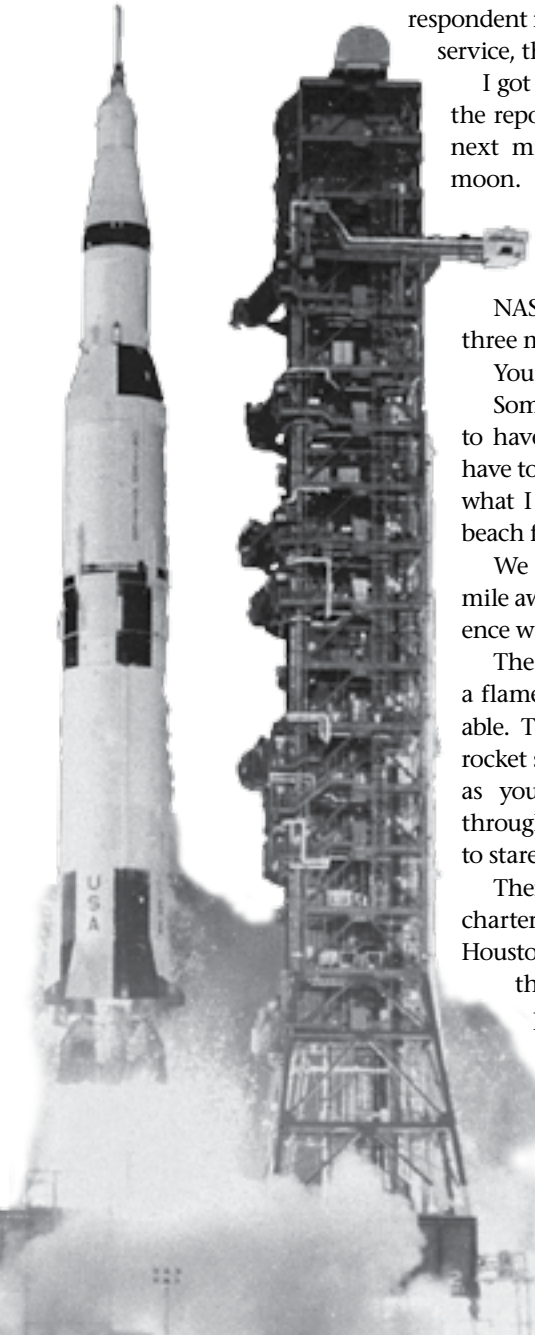
by Joel Shurkin

Forty-three years ago this summer I covered one of the most important stories in human history: The first human landings on another world. Apollo 11. Neil Armstrong. The moon.

It was a different journalism world then, and a different America. The media were concentrated, rich, powerful. America was self-assured, rich, daring.

Children, you missed a wonderful time.

In the Sixties and Seventies, newspapers and the television networks dominated the media. The papers that employed us were big, fat, and not reluctant to spend money. The *Philadelphia Inquirer*, where I worked for 12 years, produced a Sunday paper so large they had to start printing on Thursday, and on the Sunday after Thanksgiving, you could get a hernia lifting the paper from the porch. Before working there, I was a national correspondent for Reuters in New York, then for a British news service, the oldest, largest, and richest in the world.



I got to be Reuters' chief space correspondent when the reporter who had the beat said it bored him. The next mission was Apollo 11, the first men on the moon. That bored him? Naturally, I volunteered. Actually, I hurt myself climbing on the desk, waving my arms madly, jumping up and down, and screaming "take me!" They did.

NASA was launching manned missions then every three months. This is how it worked:

You would go to Cape Canaveral for the launch.

Someone figured out that it would be cheaper just to have me rent an apartment at the Cape than to have to get a hotel room every three months, so that's what I did. I had a one-bedroom apartment on the beach for two years on the expense account.

We watched launches from grandstands about a mile away, as close as you could safely get. The experience was better than sex: It never disappointed you.

The launch of the Saturn V rocket would start with a flame that grew so bright it bordered on unwatchable. Then came the noise, a crackling roar as the rocket slowly rose, a cacophony that you felt as much as you heard, rattling through the ground and through your skeleton. The only logical reaction was to stare. I filed my story, in my case, by Teletype.

Then, we tore in our rented cars to an airport for a chartered DC-8 lovingly called the "Drunk Flight" to Houston, where we got into rental cars and raced to the Manned Space Center, praying nothing happened in the two hours while we were in the air and out of communication.

This was ridiculous. But Texas congressmen, including Lyndon Johnson, told NASA that if it wanted large amounts of money to play with, they better build something large and expensive in Texas. Hence, mission control at the Manned Spacecraft Center—later the Johnson Space Center—more than a thousand miles from where the rockets went up.

Reuters' general manager in New York then was a large Englishman, Alan Paterson. Besides being a gentleman, his stated attitude was: "If you can't live better on the road than you can at home, there is no point being on the road." Hence, a legendary expense account.

Paterson's greatest fear was that if he didn't use his expense budget (rumored at $1 million in 1960s dollars) by the end of June, London would reduce it, so around April, we started flying first class.

One day I mentioned that in Jules Verne's F*rom the Earth to the Moon*, the hero is shot into space from a cannon in Florida. After the launch, he opens a bottle of Nuit St. Georges, to toast the mission.

"Fabulous," said Paterson. "Every launch go get half a case of Nuit St. Georges for the press blokes." I did. Several hundred dollars. We served the lush burgundy in Styrofoam cups because alcohol was prohibited in government installations, but the public information people managed to come wandering by just at the right time to join the toast. (The Apollo 15 astronauts later named a crater after the wine and buried a bottle in the moon where it is presumably aging amiably.)

One of my colleagues was a wine connoisseur. Thus, I learned French wines on a Reuters' expense account.

We usually had four or five people in Houston, everyone with a rented car and hotel room.

The reporters following the space program included about 100 regulars, some of whom were then, or became America's best-known science writers, several of us later won

SHURKIN continued on page 33

Joel Shurkin is freelance writer-historian specializing in medicine, science and history, based in Baltimore, Md.

The State of Science Writing, Circa 2012

by Seth Mnookin

The summer has not been an easy one for aficionados or practitioners of science science writing. There was, of course, the ongoing, death-by-a-thousand-cuts Jonah Lehrer fiasco, where, over a period of more than a month, one of the most popular and admired science writers working today was revealed to have promiscuously recycled his own work; was caught fabricating quotes by Bob Dylan; was fired from *The New Yorker*; and had his best-selling book withdrawn by his publisher. Before it was all over, the Lehrer mess had also sullied the reputation of *Wired*, one of the few popular magazines that runs long, narrative stories about science and technology, and Wired.com, which features a sterling lineup of science bloggers. (This wound was at least partially, and bewilderingly, self-inflicted.)

It would be folly to draw broad conclusions from the actions of one unscrupulous individual—but Lehrer was far from the sole case of a journalist who writes about science misleading the public, either intentionally or (as hopefully is more often the case) not. On Aug. 26, the *New York Times*'s Sunday Review section ran a piece titled "An Immune Disorder at the Root of Autism" that (no joke) proposed hookworms as a potential cure for autism. (My comment at the time was that I wished the standard for publication in op-ed pages was "interesting and plausible" as opposed to just "interesting.") Over at the tech blog Gizmodo, Jesus Diaz, whom I enjoy reading when he's writing about gadgets, made me want to claw my eyes out with his series of goshtastic dispatches that heralded the imminent arrival of a cancer-free world where the eternally young spend their days pondering their artificial memories, which they'll be able to do without having to breath—although they will still need to reckon with The Force. More recently, there's been the spectacle of Naomi Wolf butchering logic and misrepresenting research while promoting her latest book, *Vagina*. On Tuesday, *The Guardian* gave her free rein to claim, in a column non-ironically given a "Knowledge is Power" headline, that her critics were simply refusing to accept the "latest neuroscientific and other findings" about female desire.

The summer of our discontent, made glorious by the possibilities of our time.

Even moments that should have been celebratory ended up leaving many of us who care about science, and science communication, grumpy and dispirited. Last week, the massive ENCODE project—that stands for Encyclopedia Of DNA Elements—published dozens of papers that stemmed from a years-long effort to unravel the mysteries of the human genome (The project included more than 1,600 experiments on 147 cell types. The main paper alone had almost 450 authors, who collectively represented more than 30 different institutions.) This was exciting, impressive work—but, as the name of the project itself implies, what was most striking about the ENCODE results were their encyclopedic nature and not any stand-out breakthroughs. Indeed, the realities that the ENCODE research provided evidence for—that it's essential to examine genetic variation in a population when tackling disease; that variation isn't uniform across the entire genome; that large swaths of our genome that don't encode for proteins do serve other important functions—were all principles that were already pretty well understood.

But providing detailed evidence for things we (more or less) know are true is much less compelling than paradigm-shifting conclusions, which is presumably why the main ENCODE paper claimed that the team had been able to "assign biochemical functions for 80 percent of the genome" (much of which had been known by the misleading shorthand, junk DNA). That talking point, which was repeated ad nauseam by many, if not most, of the outlets covering the ENCODE results, led John Timmer to post a piece in *Ars Technica* titled, "Most of What You Read Was Wrong: How Press Releases Rewrote Scientific History."

"Unfortunately," John wrote, "the significance of that statement hinged on a much less widely reported item: the definition of 'biochemical function' used by the authors."

> This was more than a matter of semantics. Many press reports that resulted painted an entirely fictitious history of biology's past, along with a misleading picture of its present. As a result, the public that relied on those press reports now has a completely mistaken view of our current state of knowledge (this happens to be the exact opposite of what journalism is intended to accomplish). But you can't entirely blame the press in this case. They were egged on by the journals and university press offices that promoted the work—and, in some cases, the scientists themselves.

Lest anyone think that the ENCODE case was *sui generis*, a team of researchers based in France published a paper in PLOS One titled "Why Most Biomedical Findings Echoed by Newspapers Turn Out to be False: The Case of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder." (The paper's authors were intentionally evoking the title of John P.A. Ioannidis's groundbreaking 2005 piece, "Why Most Published Research Findings Are False," which built off of his earlier *JAMA* paper, "Contradicted and Initially Stronger Effects in Highly Cited Clinical Research.") After examining every newspaper report about the 10 most covered research papers on ADHD from the 1990s, the authors were able to provide empirical evidence for a troubling phenomenon that seems to be all but baked into the way our scientific culture

Seth Mnookin is co-director of MIT's Graduate Program in Science Writing. His most recent book, *The Panic Virus*, has received the NASW Science in Society Award for 2012.

operates: We pay lots of attention to things that are almost assuredly not true.

That might sound crazy, but consider: Because it's sexier to discover something than to show there's nothing to be discovered, high-impact journals show a marked preference for "initial studies" as opposed to disconfirmations. Unfortunately, as anyone who has ever worked in a research lab knows, initial observations are almost inevitably refuted or heavily attenuated by future studies—and that data tends to get printed in less prestigious journals. Newspapers, meanwhile, give lots of attention to those first, eye-catching results while spilling very little (if any) ink on the ongoing research that shows why people shouldn't have gotten all hot and bothered in the first place. (I have a high degree of confidence that the same phenomenon occurs regardless of the medium, but the PLOS One study only examined print newspapers.) The result? "[A]n almost complete amnesia in the newspaper coverage of biomedical findings."

So, to summarize: one of our biggest stars was revealed as a fraud; publications that should be exemplars of nuanced, high-quality reporting are allowing confused speculation to clutter their pages; researchers and PIOs are nudging reporters towards overblown interpretations; and everything we write about will probably end up being wrong anyway—not that we'll bother to let you know when the time comes.

■ ■ ■

And yet, and yet. Yes, the *Times*'s hookworm-as-possible-miracle-cure piece was upsetting—but it also led to the indefatigable and invaluable Emily Willingham, who is both a biologist and a longtime autism expert, doing a wonderful job unpacking that piece and analyzing the sources its author used. Yes, Naomi Wolf made a mockery of what neuroscience can (and can't) tell us, but she also sparked an excellent David Dobbs post on the "perils of neuro self-help." (Wolf, Dobbs wrote, is just the latest writer whose "shallow sips from [the] fresh founts" of neuroscience and evolutionary psychology "generate[d] an epiphanous but unjustified confidence.")

And yes, the ENCODE coverage highlighted some of deep-rooted flaws in how we value and communicate about science—but the snarled, labyrinthine debate also highlighted the incredible opportunities available to anyone interested in reading, or writing, about complex scientific issues. Genetics is a subject I know precious little about—and one I hope to write about in the future. Five years ago, it would have been difficult to know where to start. Today, I turned to Princeton genomics and evolutionary biology professor Leonid Kruglyak's Twitter stream. Among the many places that directed me was biochemist Mike White's posts at The Finch and Pea and evolutionary biologist T. Ryan Gregory's posts on ENCODE at his blog, Evolver Zone: Genomicron. Once I began pulling on those threads, they lead me to computational biologist Sean Eddy's "ENCODE says what?" post at Cryptogenomicon, the 4,900-word "My own thoughts" post that Ewan Birney, the lead scientist on the ENCODE project, put up simultaneous to the ENCODE papers' publication, and Birney's response to the reactions/backlash that ensued.

It wasn't until I sat down to write this post that I realized that those are all documents written by people who are not only working scientists but also experts in the fields in question. When I began searching out work by science writers, I found subtle, sedulous pieces like Ed Yong's "ENCODE: The Rough Guide to the Human Genome" and Brendan Maher's "Fighting About ENCODE and Junk."

The end result of all of my reading was manifold: I now have a good grasp of the ENCODE project; I'm aware of some of the big issues facing genetics; I understand why the initial coverage proceeded the way it did, why that coverage was criticized, and how to avoid similar mistakes in my own work in the future; and I have learned of, and in some cases made contact with, a range of dynamic scientists dealing with these issues.

Oh, also: I've been reminded, once again, of why the process of learning about the mysteries of the world, and having the privilege of occasionally explaining what we know about those mysteries to total strangers, is so exhilarating and energizing and, dare I say, sometimes even ennobling. ■

"The State of Science Writing, Circa 2012," PLOS Blog, The Panic Virus, Posted Sept. 14, 2012.

Featured Column

Scholarly Pursuits

Academic research relevant to the workaday world of science writing

by Ben Carollo and Rick Borchelt

How are we making a difference? But wait, how would we even know!?!

From time to time, all of us will find ourselves wondering whether all of the blood, sweat, and tears that we put into our work are making a difference. If we all had extensive evaluation budgets (and the rule of thumb in industry is 15 percent of your operating budget should be formative and evaluative research), we could perform sophisticated analyses of each project to see how our work is driving people's understanding of science issues (and we might even learn a thing or two about how to do our jobs better!). Unfortunately, very few of us have that luxury. However, there are a lot of academics in the field who are very interested in these questions, and in this issue we feature three articles that we hope will expand your thinking about the ways in which science writers make a difference in their professional, local, and global communities.

■ ■ ■

Mathelus, Sharon, Ginny Pittman and Jill Yablonski-Crepeau. Promotion of research articles to the lay press: a summary of a three-year project. *Learned Publishing* 25(3) (2012) 207-212.

Most NASW members are closely tied to the scientific publishing field in some way or other. Whether writing a press release for a recently published article or writing a newspaper story on new findings published in *Nature*, these publications drive a good part of the work that we do. We would not dream of breaking a publisher's embargo, and if research did not end up in a top-tier journal, for many of us it might as well have never been conducted. This article begins to unravel how important this relationship is, and suggests that there is real value in the promotion of research findings from these journals in the lay press.

Blackwell Publishing (now Wiley-Blackwell) began promoting "newsworthy" articles on a case-by-case basis in 2004. Newsworthy was defined as original peer-reviewed research that generated controversial debate, conveyed a benefit or treatment, or provoked a robust discussion while being easily explained to various publics via the mass media. This effort was intended, initially, to disseminate research directly to media and public audiences. This study's authors investigate whether there was a link between the use of a press release and an increase in the number of downloads or citations of an article. Notably, since the purpose of the program was to communicate to lay audiences, most of the studies chosen for press releases were observational studies, traditionally cited less often than randomized controlled trials.

…we should all be taking more time to evaluate our work.

The authors looked at the three-year period of 2004 to 2006 during which 296 press releases were produced across 99 of Wiley-Blackwell journals. For 71 percent of the articles (211) that had press releases, these articles were downloaded 1.8 times more frequently than the average article in the same issue. The authors conducted case studies on five of the articles and conducted further citation analysis of these articles. For these examples, citations increased as much 2.23 times compared to other articles in the same issue of the journal as well as for other articles in the journal throughout the year.

The authors are the first to admit two major limitations of this study: 1) The measurement of newsworthiness was not measured, and 2) there was not a control group identified to determine whether the

Scholarly Pursuits features articles from the social science research community in the United States and abroad. If you read an article you think would make a good candidate for this column, send it along to rickb@nasw.org.

Ben Carollo leads the issues analysis and response team at the National Cancer Institute at NIH. Rick Borchelt is special assistant for public affairs to the director at the National Cancer Institute at NIH.

observed effect would have happened in the absence of the press releases. It is reasonable to think that if something is actually "newsworthy" that people would pay attention to it regardless of the PR tactics. However, it is also reasonable to assume that without an additional push, there would still be many potentially interested audiences, both lay and technical, that would not learn of the discovery. Even motivated information seekers are unlikely to be able to track *all* new research developments in a field, and this study shows an additional level of evidence that science writers, PIOs, and the media play a vital role in prioritizing information for a wide variety of audiences.

There are many ways in which this issue could be further tested, but we think this raises an important philosophical issue as well. The analysis conducted in this paper is relatively straightforward and something that most people could do. The lesson here is that we should all be taking more time to evaluate our work. Even if we aren't trained in evaluation techniques and cannot develop a flawless study design, we should still be trying to learn more about how we do our work and how we can continue to improve.

■ ■ ■

Iniquez, Gerardo, Julia Taguena-Martinez, Kimmo K. Kaski, Rafael A. Barrio. Are opinions based on science: Modeling social response to scientific facts. PLOS One 7(8) 2012.

On the other hand, if you happen to have a Ph.D. in research method—or you hire a partner with one—you can design sophisticated, experimental computer models to run simulations about how people will interact in theoretical environments. The authors of this study designed a model that explores opinion formation in networks as a function of one-to-one discussions, personal perceptions of group opinions, and reactions to a common external influence similar to media. This model was developed as an effort to harness the knowledge gained from the many qualitative studies that have identified critical factors to opinion-making on scientific issues in a quantifiable way that reflects the various effects of personal knowledge, science communication, and cultural context.

The premise of the model is that each person has an opinion about scientific issues informed by their scientific education and cultural background, and that this opinion can change based on one-to-one interactions with other individuals. Additionally, there are external influences from the media and science communicators that might influence an individual's perceptions on the issue. Finally, as people perceive the opinions of others in their social network, they may be inclined to adjust their opinions based on what others in their social network believe. The model tests for the effect of a wide range of variables, such as frequency of discussions about science, willingness to change opinions, level of scientific knowledge, and scientific accuracy of media coverage.

…(science) naysayers will ultimately segregate themselves in a very tight-knit network…

Interestingly, the simulations found that when information that is scientifically sound is introduced by the mass media (or, rather, their variable representing the mass media), naysayers will ultimately segregate themselves in a very tight-knit network, whereas those who embrace the accurate information grow in numbers, but stay less interconnected. Alternatively, when inaccurate scientific information is introduced by mass media, the experts remain dispersed in the community and do not develop tight networks to oppose the inaccurate information. The implication, as identified by the authors, is that scientifically sound concepts require a greater level of mass-media input to create opinion consensus since the naysayers more readily organize themselves in communities that prevent opinion consensus. The authors offer the real social network of creationists to illustrate that this model is accurate and suggest that this happens as a need to support each other in the face of commonly accepted notions.

The authors also note that there is a saturation point at which the mass-media effect slows down significantly and the community structure remains stable. They compared this model with survey results and believe that this is consistent with data showing how aggressive propaganda does not result in a proportional, immediate increase in agreement. Integrating survey data from the EU and Mexico in the analysis, the authors determined that cultural factors at the macro level play an integral role in driving perceptions and that in scientifically skeptical societies, a strong injection of accurate or inaccurate scientific information in the mass media will drive perceptions whereas limited presentation of this information in the mass media will tend to result in a roughly equal split in perceptions.

From our perspective, this greatly validates the work that NASW members do. It certainly stands to reason that in the absence of information people will be unable to form accurate opinions, so this reinforces the need to provide accurate information about science issues where people will have greatest access to said information. Though this research approach is in its nascent stages, there are a lot of exciting ways that such models like this could be used in the future to develop insights that will allow all of us in the field to be better informed in the way we do our work.

■ ■ ■

Linke, Sebastian. Contexts constrain science in the public: How the sociobiology debate was (not) presented in the German press. *Public Understanding of Science* 21(6) (2012) 740 -758.

This article provides a real-life example of how some of these cultural and media

SCHOLARLY PURSUITS continued on page 33

In the absence of information (accurate or not), societies will sit divided on an issue.

Tracking Changes at The Tracker

By Phil Hilts

In August, head tracker Charlie Petit semi-retired from the Knight Science Journalism (KSJ) Tracker (**ksj.mit.edu/tracker**), completing more than six years at the helm. From the beginning, the Tracker has been a hit with science writers. Its substantial overall readership increases year by year.

Much of the success of the Tracker, I think, comes from Charlie's unusual abilities as a blogger. He has a sharp eye for interesting material, a sense of skepticism, a light touch as a writer, and a continuously present sense of humor. To my mind, this combination of traits goes a long way to defining the essentials needed for a good blog. Unlike more formal journalism, blogs have a personal voice. But they must still hew to the facts and be alert to the incompleteness of minute-to-minute information. Charlie has led the way in showing how this works.

He will not retire completely, but will continue to weigh in most weeks with posts. But taking over the everyday duties of the head tracker will be Paul Raeburn, veteran science correspondent, blogger, and author, whose voice is already familiar to Tracker readers. The team of trackers going forward will thus be Paul, Charlie, Deborah Blum, Pere Estupinya, and Sascha Karberg, with less frequent posts from Boyce Rensberger and Hanno Charisius.

We also expect to expand the number of trackers. We also hope to add a new feature soon—bringing in top science writers to give us guest posts from time to time on current topics of interest to our readership.

And, the Knight Science Journalism program launched a spiffed-up new website in mid-July. ■

PHIL HILTS IS DIRECTOR OF THE KNIGHT SCIENCE JOURNALISM FELLOWSHIPS.

The Rise and Fall of a New Science-Writing Program

BY PAUL RAEBURN

Two years ago, I felt lucky to announce that I had been lured to the Sunshine State by Florida Atlantic University, which offered me a free hand to develop a new master's program in science writing.

As reported here at the time (*SW*, Summer 2010), I planned to set up a newsroom where students could get immediate experience writing for the web, so that they would be prepared to move directly into new-media jobs when they finished. I was excited by the prospect of developing a new program from the ground up. How often does an opportunity like that arise?

FAU appeared to be establishing itself as a center for research. It was launching a new medical school, and there were two new world-class science institutions on campus—the Max Planck Florida Institute and Scripps Florida. The head of the communications department thought a science-writing program would mesh nicely with that, and I did, too.

Sadly, all has come tumbling down. I spent the first semester writing a 70-page proposal for the program, which was then catapulted into a labyrinth of university committees while I taught a few undergraduate classes. Somewhere, midway through, the proposal stalled, after more than a semester of deliberation.

Part of the reason it disappeared in some committee or other (there were a lot of them) was probably the changes that were occurring at the top of FAU. At first, it seemed that the announced change in administration would be good for the program. The new president —Mary Jane Saunders—is a cell biologist, no less. She appointed a new provost—Brenda Claiborne, a neuroscientist. Clearly, FAU was interested in science, and so was conservative Florida governor Rick Scott who stated he wanted the state's universities to focus on science and mathematics.

As FAU administrators pored over the budget for things to cut, the science-writing program was evidently an easy target.

Alas, Gov. Scott was also promising sharp cuts in state funding for universities, and he followed through in the spring of 2012 with $300 million in cuts. As FAU administrators pored over the budget for things to cut, the science-writing program was evidently an easy target.

I have no quibble with that. The president and provost should be able to cut where and when they like. It was the manner in which they did it that I found distressing. Nobody told me the program was on the chopping block. I was not offered a chance to defend it. The dean and the department head who hired me were demoted. They were replaced by administrators with no knowledge of the science-writing program or any interest in it. One came from a background in peace studies, and the other was a pianist.

I found out about the program's demise when, at a faculty meeting, a budget was distributed that showed elimination of the funding. "I guess that means you," the new department head said to me later.

It was not a happy experience. I enjoyed teaching; I liked the undergrads I met, and I liked passing on what's been given to me by so many reporters, editors, and writers over the years. But while I'm happy to talk to friends' classes about science writing, I don't think you'll find me stepping into a classroom of my own again. ■

PAUL RAEBURN IS A JOURNALIST, A MEDIA CRITIC AT THE KNIGHT SCIENCE JOURNALISM TRACKER, AND THE AUTHOR OF *DO FATHERS MATTER?* THE NEW SCIENCE OF FATHERHOOD, TO BE PUBLISHED NEXT YEAR.

FATHER AND SON © CORBIS

Hire Your Kids and Lose Less to the IRS

by Julian Block

A perfectly legal way for freelance writers to trim taxes is to employ their children. Their salaries stay in the family, but are shifted into their lower tax bracket. The jobs also put some "jingle in their jeans," familiarize them with freelancing, and instill a bit of the old work ethic.

Responsible youngsters are able to handle all kinds of chores. Some of the more common ones include answering telephone calls, cleaning offices, addressing envelopes, filing, bookkeeping, secretarial, and other clerical work, and making deliveries. Nowadays, lots of kids are more adept with computers than older employees.

THE WAY IT WORKS

Imagine that your business hires Eli, your 16-year-old son, to do clerical work after school, on weekends, and during school vacations. The law allows him to offset earned income with a standard deduction—the no-questions-asked amount authorized for someone who doesn't itemize. For 2012, a single person's standard deduction is $5,950. So the first $5,950 of Eli's earnings escapes income taxes. He can use the money to support himself or put away for college, a car, or a vacation.

True, earnings above $5,950 will lead to a tax liability for Eli. However, the excess falls into the bottom income-tax bracket of 10 percent, which applies to taxable income of up to $8,700. His 15 percent bracket applies to taxable income between $8,700 and $35,350. In fact, using 2012 as a marker, not until taxable income surpasses $35,350 would this part-time teenage employee move beyond the 15 percent bracket and ascend to the relatively lofty 25 percent bracket.

If you're in a combined federal and state bracket of 30 percent, hiring him lowers your income taxes by about $1,785 (30 percent of $5,950). Of course, the exact amount will depend on whether Eli's wages are subject to Social Security and other payroll taxes.

There's an additional carrot if you don't operate your business as a corporation—sidestepping Medicare and Social Security taxes on wages paid to under age 18 sons or daughters. To qualify for the exemption, you must do business as (1) a sole proprietorship (IRS lingo for the lone owner of a full-time or part-time business that's not formed as a corporation or a partnership with a partner other than your spouse) or (2) a husband-and-wife partnership. Consequently, whatever income you're able to shift to Eli lowers your Social Security taxes.

The write-offs survive scrutiny only if you're able to establish that the children actually render services.

WITHSTANDING AUDITS

IRS auditors are understandably suspicious of deductions for wages paid to your own children. The write-offs survive scrutiny only if you're able to establish that the children actually render services. Expect the feds to throw out a deduction for hiring, say, a six-year old to do photocopies; someone that age likely lacks the skills or discipline for office work.

Another hurdle is the "reasonableness" requirement. Wages paid to children can't be more than the going rate for unrelated employees who perform comparable tasks. That doesn't mean you have to be a parsimonious paymaster who doles out only the minimum wage. But it does mean that you have to treat your children the same as any other employee and keep the usual records showing amounts paid and hours worked. Give them W-2 forms, even if they qualify to exempt their wages from withholding for income taxes; use checks drawn on business accounts to evidence the payments. Otherwise, the IRS might contend that the payments exceeded the going rate or that your youngsters weren't bona fide employees; they merely rendered the token kinds of services that parents expect their children to perform. ■

Julian Block is an attorney and author based in Larchmont, N.Y. He has been cited as: "a leading tax professional" (*New York Times*); "an accomplished writer on taxes" (*Wall Street Journal*); and "an authority on tax planning" (*Financial Planning Magazine*). For information about his books, visit julianblocktaxexpert.com.

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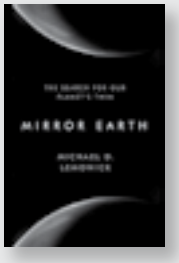
Why Do Women Crave More Sex in the Summer? 112 Questions That Women Keep Asking and That Keep Everyone Else Guessing **by Patricia Barnes-Svarney (NASW), published by NAL (Penguin Group)**

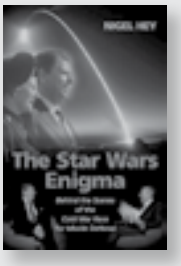
Barnes-Svarney's book combines health, science, and humor. She says it started from a bunch of questions her female and some male friends asked her just out of curiosity. The research for those questions (plus of few of her own) quickly turned into a book. The questions and answers highlight the science of women's bodies, looks, hormones, exercise, aging, sex and relationships, brains, eating and sleeping, and a few extras. Among the tantalizing and, more often than not, humorous female questions were: Why is a woman always the one who hears the car making a noise? Can a woman's relationships with men really be driven by the time of the month? How do a woman's hormones affect her shopping list? Why do women like bling? Why are most women hooked on chocolate? And, of course, why do women crave more sex in the summer? According to Barnes-Svarney all of the answers are based on scientific research with references and more sources at the back of the book. ■ *Barnes-Svarney can be reached at barnessvarney@hotmail.com or visited at her websites pattybarnes.net or whydowomencravemoresex.com. Book's publicist is Melissa Broder at 212-366-2538 or melissa.broder@us.penguingroup.*

Mirror Earth: The Search for Our Planet's Twin **by Michael D. Lemonick (NASW), published by Walker**



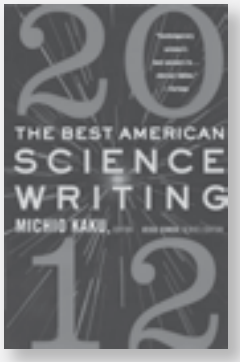
In the mid-1990s, astronomers made history when they detected three planets orbiting stars in the Milky Way. More than 500 planets have been found since then, none of which could support life as we know it. Now, armed with more powerful technology, planet hunters are racing to find a true twin of Earth. Science writer Michael Lemonick's book *Mirror Earth* unveils the passionate quest of "exoplaneteers" such as Geoff Marcy, at UC Berkeley, who is the world's most successful planet hunter having found two of the first three extra-solar planets. There's also Bill Borucki, at the NASA Ames Research Center, who struggled for more than a decade to launch the Kepler mission, the only planet finder, human or machine, to beat Marcy's record. And, David Charbonneau, at Harvard, who realized that Earth-like planets would be much easier to find if he looked at tiny stars called M-dwarfs rather than stars like the Sun. Unlike other races of discovery, the scientists consult and cooperate with one another. But only one will be the first to find Earth's twin. Lemonick is senior staff writer at Climate Central and a former senior science writer at *TIME* magazine. ■ *He can be reached at mikelemonick@gmail.com or 609-924-8348.*

The Star Wars Enigma: Behind the Scenes of the Cold War Race for Missile Defense **by Nigel Hey (NASW), published by Potomac Press**



A behind-the-scenes look at Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative. The year 1982 was a desperate time for the U.S. defense community. The United States had no effective system to completely protect itself from an attack with nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missiles, which the Soviet Union possessed in large quantity, and the doomsday philosophy of mutually assured destruction seemed inescapable. But people in the Reagan administration, including the President himself, were not content with what they viewed as a morally unacceptable status quo. Then Adm. James Watkins, a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, asked, "Wouldn't it be better if we could develop a system that would protect, rather than avenge, our people?" With that, the President's commitment to the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) became certain. Hey says ultimately, SDI reflected Western political idealism, a powerful ingredient in the struggle to finally conquer the terrors of the Cold War and to allay the threat of nuclear holocaust. *The Star Wars Enigma* tells this dramatic story. ■ *Hey can be reached by phone at 505-898-6679 or at nigel@nasw.org.*

The Best American Science Writing 2012



The latest edition of this annual series, *The Best American Science Writing 2012* offers a collection of the year's most relevant and compelling science writing. This year's guest editor is Michio Kaku, bestselling author of *Physics of the Impossible*, co-founder of string field theory, theoretical physicist, and popularize of science.

"The best science articles have a 'takeaway factor,'" Kaku wrote in his introduction. "(They also) give us some deep insight into the human condition or our place in the universe." With this in mind, Kaku selected articles that cover a spectrum of scientific inquiry—biochemistry, physics, and astronomy, to genetics, evolutionary theory, and cognition—from publications such as the *New York Times*, *National Geographic*, *Popular Mechanics*, the *New Yorker*, *Science News*, and many more.

NASW members are well represented in this volume. They include:

- Denise Grady writes about a new way to fight one of the body's most dreaded diseases in "An Immune System Trained to Kill Cancer" (*New York Times*)
- David Dobbs explores the strange nature of the teenage brain in "Beautiful Brain" (*National Geographic*)
- Josh Fischman explores perhaps one of the most controversial areas of brain studies in "Criminal Minds" (*Chronicle of Higher Education*)
- Douglas Fox uses simple physics and neurology to determine how much brainpower can be squeezed into our skulls in "The Limits of Intelligence" (*Scientific American*)
- Linda Marsa raises a provocative question—Why the wacky weather?—in "Going to Extremes" (*Discover*)
- Charles Petit writes about one of the great revolutions in all of astronomy—the discovery of extra-solar planets—in "Stellar Oddballs" (*Science News*)

NOTE: Ecco/Harper seeks submissions for *The Best American Science Writing 2013*. Send work, published in 2012, electronically to series editor Jesse Cohen at jesse.cohen5@verizon.net. Include a brief cover letter. Deadline: Dec. 31, 2012.

Wonderment: A Love Affair With Adventure, Writing, Travel, Philosophy, and Family Life
by Nigel Hey (NASW) published by Troubador Press

This autobiography offers a trip around the world and around the mind. The heart of Nigel Hey's fast-paced story lies in its varied, thoughtful, and sometimes hilarious collection of memoirs about writing, printing, publishing, media, Native Americans, the American mountain states, world travel, and amateur theater. Hey's life has been both enriched and at times endangered by an insatiable curiosity. In his boyhood his parents take him to a new home, touching off a semi-nomadic five years that eventually ends in the American West. Small-town realities in an all-Mormon community teach him the lessons of being an outsider and awake a spirit of independent thought and action. After college, he heads for his first fulltime job, in Bermuda, then to England. These mark the start of a rollercoaster life in which he achieves professional success while fulfilling the responsibilities of parenthood and enduring the heartaches of two failed marriages. Throughout, he explores the vestiges of colonial Spain that survive in the mountains of the American Southwest, drives a tunnel in the remote mountains of Greece, dances with native Americans, uncovers the history of high-tech Soviet weapon science, explores his Yorkshire and Lancashire roots, while tackling the biggest question of all: Where does he really belong. ■ *Hey can be reached by phone at 505-898-6679 or at nigel@nasw.org.*

Science Left Behind: Feel-Good Fallacies and the Rise of the Anti-Scientific Left
by Alex B. Berezow (NASW) and Hank Campbell published by PublicAffairs Books

To listen to most pundits and political writers, evolution, stem cells, and climate change are the only scientific issues worth mentioning—and the only people who are anti-science are conservatives. Yet those on the left have numerous fallacies of their own. Aversion to clean energy programs, basic biological research, and even life-saving vaccines come naturally to many progressives. These are positions supported by little more than junk-science and paranoid thinking. Science writers Alex B. Berezow and Hank Campbell have drawn open the curtain on the left's fear of science. As *Science Left Behind* reveals, vague inclinations about the wholesomeness of all things natural, the unhealthiness of the unnatural, and many other seductive fallacies have led to an epidemic of misinformation. The results: public health crises, damaging and misguided policies, and worst of all, a new culture war over basic scientific facts—in which the left is just as culpable as the right. ■ *Berezow is editor of RealClearScience.com and can be reached at alex@realclearscience.com. Campbell is the founder of Science 2.0 (science20.com) and can be reached at 800-511-8329.*

NASW President
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President's Letter

IT WAS THE POKER GAME THAT DID IT. LONG, LONG AGO, WHEN I WAS JUST STARTING OUT AS A FREELANCER, A BUNCH OF GUYS ASKED ME TO PLAY POKER WITH THEM AT A SCIENCE WRITERS' PARTY AT AAAS. NOT JUST ANY GUYS: VETERAN *WALL STREET JOURNAL* REPORTER JERRY BISHOP, LEGENDARY *SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE* SCIENCE EDITOR DAVE PERLMAN, AND CASW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BEN PATRUSKY.

The big dogs were kind to this newbie, drawing me into their conversation and even letting me win a few hands. Anyone who's worked in a newsroom knows that the big dogs are often not so gracious. But these science writers were different.

I remember that poker game as the first time I realized there was a National Organization of Science Writers. I like poker, and I like hanging out with smart, funny science writers. So I joined NASW. I had no idea how much the organization and its members would do for me, helping me launch a successful freelance business, providing a network of virtual friends and colleagues to fight the isolation of working alone, and providing mentors and teachers. Without NASW, I am convinced that I never would have succeeded as a science writer. And I wouldn't have had nearly as much fun.

I volunteered for NASW because it was fun, too; making good things happen with other science writers is even better than just hanging out with them. After a while, someone persuaded me to run for the board, and after a few attempts I was elected. Stranger still, I eventually became NASW president.

Helping to run a nonprofit veers between feeling like you've just been handed the keys to dad's convertible, and feeling like you've got to change the oil. There are opportunities to dream big and make wonderful things happen for people through programs like NASW's new Big Ideas grants, which we launched two years ago. And there are tedious but essential tasks like improving budget oversight and crafting a memorandum of understanding with our friends at CASW so our joint meetings come off without a hitch.

Being president of NASW has given me the license to kick butt to promote the free flow of science information, a charter mission of NASW. We worked with *Columbia Journalism Review* to survey members on access to government sources, and joined with other national journalism organizations to pressure the federal government to allow unfettered access to federal researchers and databases. The feds haven't rolled over, but they know we're on their case.

And who knew that being NASW president would give me a front-row seat to Arab Spring? Our co-sponsorship of the 2011 World Conference of Science Journalists almost became a victim to the forces of political change, as the original conference site in Cairo became a key protest site. We worked hard to find a solution that would keep the conference in the Arab world. I'm proud that we succeeded, and prouder still that more than half of the 750 attendees in Doha, Qatar, came from the developing world. I'm looking forward to continuing to work on NASW's outreach to science writers in other countries, particularly our neighbors in Latin America.

I leave the presidency knowing that NASW is going to be in very good hands with our new president, *Wall Street Journal* reporter Ron Winslow; vice president Robin Marantz Henig; treasurer Beryl Benderly; and secretary Deborah Franklin. They'll be joined by a terrific new board that's a healthy mix of old and new members.

Mixing old and new is also what we're each doing as science writers—experimenting with new digital tools and new business models while maintaining the old school standards of accuracy, accountability, and superb writing. Not so very long ago I wasn't sure if there was a future for science writing. But I look at the winners of our 2012 Science in Society Awards, and am convinced we're building a bright future for ourselves one in which top-quality work will be rewarded. ■

I like poker, and I like hanging out with smart, funny science writers. So I joined NASW.

BISHOP AND PATRUSKY BY LYNNE FRIEDMANN; PERLMAN COURTESY OF THE *SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE*; WEB IMAGE COURTESY OF NASW; DAVIS COURTESY OF MARK D. COHEN

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Cyberbeat

WE'VE ROLLED OUT A COUPLE OF NEW ADDITIONS TO THE SCIENCEWRITERS (**NASW.ORG**) WEBSITE SO FAR THIS YEAR, AND MORE ARE IN THE PIPELINE.

Probably the most significant new feature is the Funding Sources Database, intended as a comprehensive listing of organizations with money for journalists who need financial help with their careers. It includes funders that offer grants and fellowships, with strings attached and without, and details on how to apply for each form of assistance.

NASW's new Funding Sources Database provides a list of organizations which can financially help journalists with their careers.

Painstakingly developed by NASW member Madeline Bodin under our guest editor program, the database also has an automatic function to remind funders when it is time to review and update their entries. At this writing, there are 137 entries ranging from travel fellowships for journalism conferences to support for independent reporting projects.

The database is available to all NASW members at **nasw.org/funding_sources** (NASW member login required). Each entry in the database has a link at the bottom for comments. If you've had personal experience with any of these programs, please consider using that link to add your thoughts.

Behind the scenes. The server that

Dispatches from the Director

Tinsley Davis
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The Rewards of Involvement

Give back, network, and help advance the field of science writing.

On a recent Saturday, I found myself sitting in a **dusty field under a blazing sun, with no shade, as the temperature climbed into the nineties. Another weekend, I arose at 4:30 a.m., drove an hour, and stood on my feet schlepping boxes all day. In both instances, I was a volunteer giving back to organizations that I support. And, I enjoyed the heck out of what I was doing. My engagement and sense of purpose as a volunteer mitigated both the early hours and the unsavory weather.**

Fortunately, volunteering for NASW doesn't involve hot, dusty fields. Volunteers are recruited because they have a talent that the organization needs or they step forward and become involved simply as a way to give back for all that NASW has done for them.

Yes, volunteering takes time away from paid work, from families, and from that elusive element known as "leisure." But, time and time again, I've heard volunteers report that they receive much more than they give by way of personal satisfaction, networking opportunities, and even new skill sets that translate to advancing their professional work and careers as science writers.

One of the most rewarding aspects of volunteering is meeting and interacting with new people, but it can be a challenge to be actively involved with an organization whose members are spread across the country. Once a year, as we come together at the annual workshops, let's remind each other that the heart of NASW is those who give of their enormous talents to help their fellow writers and to advance the field of science writing.
So, make a session organizer, board member, local organizer, or speaker's day bright by saying "thanks."

hosts both the main NASW site and the annual conference sites got a major software upgrade in August to stay ahead of various security issues and bug fixes with our operating system (CentOS).

In coming months, we will tackle an even bigger project by upgrading our content management framework (Drupal) to the most current version. We hope to include some major new features and a lot of minor fixes for other site features in that project, which was approved by the NASW board in June as part of its annual budgeting process.

Now, let's hear from the lists:

NASW-FREELANCE

A June 6 post on the front page of the ScienceWriters website set off a discussion of who's to blame for bad science writing—lazy reporters or shoddy work by public information officers.

The subject at hand was coverage of a study linking coffee drinking to longevity, and the subsequent debunking of that conclusion: "For every study that comes out, a host of media outlets will report to one extreme, and then some smart guy or girl will come along and prove everyone wrong, digging into the study and using other research to show that the study does not say what we all hoped and dreamed," Rebecca Greenfield wrote in the Atlantic Wire article that prompted the ScienceWriters post.

First up was Portland, Ore., writer Shawn Radcliffe, who expressed sweeping skepticism about the work PIOs do.

"I rarely trust what PIOs write," he said. "Not that I think they are intentionally misleading me, it's just that I find errors in what they write. I hate to write articles without seeing the original journal article, or talking to the researcher directly."

Mary Beckman of the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory didn't let the implications of that last sentence pass unchallenged.

"As a PIO, I don't write articles without seeing the original journal article and talking to the researcher…This whole blame game is really stupid. The people to blame for bad science writing are bad writers, editors, and headline writers (not good writers who make mistakes based on the fact that they are human), and they can be found on either side of the hack-flack divide."

Still, the blaming continued.

"From the hack side, don't forget that two other 'chefs' are stirring the press-release pot. Some scientists have been known to exaggerate the importance of their own work, and the poor flak who prepares a press release has to rely on their authority. Management also has its own agendas, and can try to pump up the importance of minor advances when they want to show the university, lab, or company has been doing something worthwhile (especially when progress has been rather thin on the ground lately)." (Auburndale, Mass., freelancer Jeff Hecht)

"Excellent point. Let me add another chef: editors at magazines, newspapers, and other media outlets, who put pressure on reporters, overtly or subtly, to make stories as sexy as possible." (Climate Central science writer Michael Lemonick)

But retiring Ohio State PIO Earle Holland took issue with Hecht's comment about press releases being prepared on the authority of the scientists whose work is being discussed.

"Science PIOs don't have to rely on the scientists' 'authority' any more than any other writer or reader has to. They can be knowledgeable enough to discover when claims are being exaggerated, when specifics and caveats are being hedged! If they're not satisfied with the quality of the work after reading the paper and interviewing the source, they can simply kill the story, or be honest with the source and talk about their concerns! At the end of the day, it's the PIO's credibility that's on the line and anyone willing to risk that just so they don't have to have an uncomfortable conversation with the source really doesn't belong in the job…

"And yes, institutional management does have its own agendas that sometimes bring pressure on the PIO to tout things they might question. It's up to the PIO to have earned the respect and trust of his/her leadership by ensuring the reliability of the science they write about. And yes, that's often a tough thing to accomplish and puts the PIO in harm's way. But at the end of the day, the only real thing of value to a PIO—aside from their writing ability—is their integrity.

"Young PIOs will argue—and often have said to me—that they're not in a position of power or authority to take a strict stance. But that's a cop-out! Nobody gives you authority in such cases—you have to have earned it, both inside the institution and out. If you don't want to fight for the honesty in science reporting, then don't be a science PIO!"

For the rest of the discussion, including comments on whether last year's reports of faster-than-light neutrinos were further examples of poor work by reporters, PIOs, or both, see the June 7-11 thread, "Who's to blame for bad science writing?" in the NASW-Freelance archives: **nasw.org/nasw-freelance-whos-blame-bad-science-writing**. ■

The Free Lance

Freelance Contracts Database

IN ORDER TO HELP FREELANCERS NAVIGATE THE LABYRINTH OF CONTRACTS AND LEGALESE—AND INCREASE THEIR CHANCE OF NEGOTIATING REASONABLE AND FAIR TERMS—THE FREELANCE COMMITTEE IS UNDERTAKING THE TASK OF BUILDING A REFERENCE CONTRACTS DATABASE. THIS DATABASE WILL BE AVAILABLE TO NASW MEMBERS ONLY, WILL BE SEARCHABLE BY KEY TERMS, WILL CONTAIN A GLOSSARY, AND WILL BE CHOCK FULL OF USEFUL CONTRACTS AND CLAUSES—BOTH GOOD AND BAD, SO WE CAN LEARN FROM EACH OTHER'S SUCCESSES AND TRIALS.

Here's where you come in. We need relevant writing contracts or clauses from the last three years.

In considering what to submit, please note the following:

- Ideally, send word processing document files (Word, Pages or text); but we would rather have PDFs than no contract at all.
- If you need to redact sensitive information, we understand. The more you leave in, however, the more useful the database will be to others. You can contact Jennie Dusheck at dusheck@gmail.com to work with you on an approach that feels comfortable. We expect you to leave out your name, but hope you can include the name of the client.

At the top of your submission, please list a few things that will help us out (and in this order would be even better):

- Year the contract was offered/signed.

- Type of client (newspaper, magazine, book, NGO, research institution, pharma company, etc.).
- Rights sold (First North American rights, all rights, work made for hire, etc).
- Length of time to negotiate the contract.
- Clauses you negotiated.
- Before and after versions, if you negotiated a clause.

Please send your submissions to DeLene Beeland at delene@nasw.org.

Thank you! ■

Freelance committee: Contracts database subcommittee members helping with this effort: Jennie Dusheck, Jill Adams, Jennifer Wettlaufer, Ricki Lewis, and DeLene Beeland.

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The PIO Forum

Acknowledging funding sources benefits everyone

PIOs AND THEIR COLLEAGUES MIGHT HAVE NOTICED A PUSH NIH RECENTLY MADE TO REINFORCE THE REQUIREMENT THAT GRANTEE INSTITUTIONS PROVIDE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING IN PRESS RELEASES, STORIES, AND OTHER PUBLICLY FACING ITEMS. SOME OF YOU MAY ALSO HAVE HEARD FROM NIH LATELY ABOUT INCLUDING GRANT NUMBERS IN PRESS RELEASES AND SIMILAR MATERIALS, TOO. BOTH ARE PART OF AN EFFORT BY NIH TO BETTER TELL THE STORY ABOUT FEDERAL INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH IN WAYS THAT CAN BE UNDERSTOOD BY NONSCIENTISTS. HERE'S WHAT THESE PROJECTS ARE ALL ABOUT.

In today's funding climate, federal agencies like the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Energy, and the National Science Foundation are constantly under siege from budget-cutting efforts. NIH alone funded 44,642 grants in 2011, and wants to continue supporting innovative research.

Unfortunately, the message that federal dollars helped support those researchers at institutions across the country does not come across to the people who make budget decisions. If you were to ask someone on the street who paid for the research going on at a local university, her response is almost assuredly the school, the state, or maybe even a private foundation. Federal PIOs struggle to make the connection between research and the money that made it happen. We need decision leaders to realize where the funding actually originated so they don't cut those sources—our budgets—allowing us to continue to fund our universities and research institutions.

NIH is implementing an existing agreement—required by statute for more than a decade—that all investigators (or their grants offices) sign when they accept our money. In the past, PIs were aware that they should include the funding institution on their papers, presentations, and other publications, and many journals now also require this. But few PIs or PIOs know that news releases and stories are also included on the list of publications that require acknowledgement, and that it's also a statutory requirement.

The grant number issue isn't in statute, but NIH will be including this language going forward in the notices of award to investigators. In addition to asking our grantees to mention that the funding came from NIH, we are also asking that the project numbers for the grants that supported the research be included. Why? We are using the project number to link news releases to our publicly available grant database, RePORTER (**projectreporter.nih.gov**). Currently, any information on projects at grantee institutions in this public and frequently consulted database was provided by the researcher as the abstract to a grant application and, to be charitable, usually was not written for public consumption. By linking well-written public releases and stories to the database, reporters, Congressional staff, and the public can read a wonderfully crafted narrative about the project and hopefully better understand the science our grantee institutions do.

There are limitations to this system: We can't link to PDFs and each release or story that we link to has to have its own URL to prevent confusion when multiple stories are told in a single document, such as annual reports. But we are constantly working to make the project as efficient and easy for PIOs as possible. We recently collaborated with EurekAlert! to add a grant number section to their submission form—if you include the grant number and the funding institution, it automatically populates to our grant database and absolves you of any need to include the grant number in the body or boilerplate for the release or story.

Another important reason to include funding information in releases is transparency. Taxpayers—and increasingly reporters—are calling for more openness in how research is funded and conducted. Who thought this project was important enough to fund? Did a pharmaceutical company lend support? Where might someone look for similar projects? Telling our audiences the funding source is an act of openness. The vast majority of research today is conducted with outside sponsorships of one kind or another, and we should make it standard practice to include the funder up front, in the release or in its boilerplate.

[An] important reason to include funding information in releases is transparency.

In short, our goal in recognizing funders, and in associating your news stories with the grants database, in news and web materials is two-fold: not only does it reinforce the importance of federal funding to research progress, it gives readers and policymakers important context about the project and about the grantee institution. We hope you agree, and will help make our project successful and link the dollars to the research. For more information on NIH's funding acknowledgement initiative, contact the PIO network at pio@nih.gov. ■

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News From Afar

IT'S NOT EVERY DAY THAT THE PRESIDENT OF A COUNTRY, IN A SPEECH THAT WELCOMES AN IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE TO HIS CAPITAL CITY, QUOTES FROM HIS OWN BOOKS OF POETRY. NOR DOES THE BAG OF MATERIALS PRESENTED TO PARTICIPANTS AT A SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE GENERALLY INCLUDE A BOOK OF POEMS ON THE SUBJECT OF SCIENCE COMPOSED SPECIFICALLY FOR THE OCCASION BY A DOZEN OF A COUNTRY'S LEADING POETS. BUT THIS WAS NOT EVERY SCIENCE CONFERENCE. THIS WAS EUROSCIENCE OPEN FORUM 2012 (ESOF2012) IN DUBLIN, A CITY THAT EACH JUNE 16 CELEBRATES A FICTIONAL CHARACTER'S DAYLONG RAMBLE THROUGH ITS STREETS AND WHOSE BRIDGES ARE NAMED FOR WRITERS.

This writer had the good fortune to attend ESOF2012 (July 11 to 15) as a recipient (along with fellow NASWers Steve Ashley, Gretchen Cuda-Kroen, Sid Perkins, Neil Savage, William Schulz, and Erik Vance) of a journalism fellowship from the Robert Bosch Stiftung, the German foundation. From the welcoming remarks by Ireland's president Michael D. Higgins, who reminded us that "from stardust we are made," and a stylish opening program that included virtuoso performances of traditional Irish music and dance, through a conference program that included among its hundreds of speakers many of the country's top researchers and science policy and education experts, Ireland used ESOF2012 to display its accomplishments and ambitions in technology and science.

The city of Dublin meanwhile put on a City of Science festival that invited the public, and especially children, to a wide range of science-oriented events aimed at non-experts. And what scribe could fail to find inspiration from working in the media center of the elegant, brand-new Convention Centre Dublin, which afforded an expansive view of James Joyce's storied River Liffey just outside? I doubt that the *Science* Careers blog posts I sent from that room reveal anything of the master's genius, but throughout my stay the garrulous, welcoming Dubliners, their lilting brand of English, and their deep respect for its leading exponents, captivated this lover of our common tongue.

Robert Bosch Stiftung sponsors the international journalism fellows in order to broaden the understanding of European research and science policy among journos from foreign parts. Having written almost exclusively for North American publications (except for a piece in a magazine published in Jerusalem) about very North-America-centric research and science policy, I found the European perspective extremely enlightening. Much of my work centers on science policy and science education, and Europe's quite different approaches to a variety of questions will give my work a broader outlook in the months to come. Particularly striking was the highly international orientation of the European scientists, many of whom had worked in a number of different countries and all of whom appeared to speak very good English.

Held mere days after the historic announcement of the Higgs boson, ESOF2012 highlighted the event with a keynote speech by CERN's director general Rolf-Dieter Heuer. In introducing Heuer, who a year ago had predicted discovery of the Higgs by the end of the present year, Ronan McNulty of the school of physics at University College Dublin thanked him for speeding up the discovery in time for the conference. Another rock star of the gathering was J. Craig Venter, who gave not one but two highly publicized talks. The conference's hottest ticket (and it was a ticketed performance) was undoubtedly Venter's evening lecture, "What is Life?—A 21st Century Perspective" held in the stately 18th century Examination Hall of historic Trinity College. One of the City of Science events, this was billed as an update of the lecture given by Erwin Schroedinger at Trinity in 1943 that predicted the nature of DNA. That lecture in turn inspired a book, which reportedly inspired a generation of young scientists. One of them, James Watson, was on hand this July 12 at Trinity to declare Shroedinger's volume indeed highly inspirational and Venter's talk "useful."

Not to be outdone in the evening pursuit of scientific knowledge, the international journalism corps also turned out for a program on applied biochemistry, which included empirical testing of the results. This practically oriented exercise occurred at the Guinness Storehouse, one of the city's major tourist attractions, where a lavish exhibition and live demonstrations by a skilled pourer explains the process that goes into making one of Ireland's most famous products, including the role of nitrogen in producing the celebrated creamy head. A catered dinner accompanied by traditional music followed in the facility's rooftop party room, which affords a very interesting view of the city (which was fully visible throughout the party, as the light doesn't fade until close to 11 p.m.) Empirical trials by your correspondent indicated that the flavor is indeed more delicious, and the head, if produced by the correct two-step process, is indeed far creamier, in Ireland

It's not every day that the president of a country, in a speech…quotes from his own books of poetry.

Upcoming Meetings

June 24-28, 2013 • ***8th World Conference of Science Journalists,*** Helsinki, Finland
wcsj2013.org

May 5-8, 2014 • ***13th PCST (Public Communication of Science and Technology) Conference,*** Salvador, Bahia, Brazil
pcst2014.org

June 21-26, 2014 • ***7th ESOF (EuroScience Open Forum),*** Copenhagen, Denmark
esof.eu

CLANCY COURTESY OF MARC LEIBERMAN

than on our side of the Atlantic. (Your correspondent continued this research during an additional week traveling in Ireland and is pleased to report that the initial conclusion was continually confirmed.)

Besides covering the events specifically related to ESOF2012, this reporter was deputized by NASW president Nancy Shute to represent NASW at a special meeting of the World Federation of Science Journalists held during the conference. This meeting accomplished important work for WFSJ including approving a new mission statement and set of bylaws for the organization, which will permit it to qualify for charitable status in Canada, where WFSJ is headquartered. This, in turn, will permit WFSJ to avail itself of grants that will support the office and the organization's first full-time executive director. The meeting also afforded me the very welcome chance to spend time with a number of colleagues I had last met last summer in Doha.

From my own standpoint, attending ESOF2012 as a Robert Bosch Stiftung fellow was altogether a terrific experience. I would encourage any journo interested in learning more about European science (or, dare I say it, Europe) to apply for ESOF2014, in Copenhagen. ■

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Regional Groups

NEW YORK

In July, board member Carol Milano arranged for SWINY members a rare opportunity for a private, guided tour of Hallett and the Pond, Central Park's smallest, little-known woodland area. Attendees had the opportunity to learn its history, enjoy its peacefulness, beauty, and wildlife—and discover the mystery behind its waterfall.

SWINY welcomes two new board members: Rita Baron-Faust, a healthcare journalist, and Rachel Yarmolinsky, director of media relations and marketing, Columbia University Department of Psychiatry, New York State Psychiatric Institute.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

In July, NCSWA members enjoyed a private tour of the exhibit "The Utopian Impulse: Buckminster Fuller and the Bay Area," at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The exhibit explored how Fuller's ideas inspired technology, architecture, and product design in the Bay Area. The group also got a bonus docent tour of important works in the museum's permanent collection.

A perfect summer weekend found 20 NCSWAers hiking and learning about water dynamics and ecology at the University of California's Angelo Coast Range Reserve, one of the UC Natural Reserve System's 38 protected natural areas for research and education. (More on the reserve system at **nrs.ucop.edu**.)

UC Berkeley ecologist and plant physiologist Todd Dawson led a hike along the steep wooded slopes above Elder Creek and explained the basics of an ambitious research project at the site that aims to trace rainwater through a small hillside watershed—a type of region not well represented in current efforts to model water's likely fate in a warming climate. Scientists have installed hundreds of sensors to follow and measure water as it moves inland from Pacific storms, gets intercepted by vegetation and land surfaces, is transpired back to the atmosphere by plants, or travels by surface and subsurface paths to emerge as river runoff and travel back to the ocean.

Geomorphologist Bill Dietrich described some of his field and lab work on how rock fissures appear to sequester and release rainwater, and how the timing may affect vegetation survival as hillside water becomes scarce in summer. Water ecologist Mary Powers explained some of the stream biology-chemistry interactions. A few surprises have already emerged from the project: Very little water flows overland; quite a lot gets stored in rocks; and different tree species can hold and release water in very different ways.

Visitors camped or slept in rustic cabins onsite and shared a hearty pasta dinner the night before the guided hillside tour-tutorial. Some came a day early and took Saturday hikes in the 4,000-acre reserve.

A late August weeknight brought NCSWA members together for a public San Francisco showing of a chilling double bill: "Contagion" and "Panic in the Streets." Between films, Mark Smolinsky, director of Global Health Threats for the Skoll Global Threats Fund, talked about his work as the science consultant on "Contagion" and how the world would likely respond in a global pandemic. Some scary stuff and warnings that it's not just people with homes in earthquake zones who should keep a two weeks' supply of food and water.

NORTH CAROLINA

It started with a conversation at the ScienceWriters2007 party in Spokane: Would we be able to pull off a NASW/CASW meeting? Who would take the lead? Five years later, ScienceWriters2012 has become a fairly impressive collection of tours and talent from the vast amount of scientific research that North Carolina offers, and yet we barely scratched the surface! It became a group effort, sponsored not by one university, but by the entire region: four universities, non-profits, foundations, and quasi-governmental organizations. There are too many people to name and to thank, but in due time we will try to do so on the **sconc.org** website.

In other news, SCONC will begin hosting a pizza lunch series with local researchers, that was formerly run by *American Scientist* magazine out of Sigma Xi. Sigma Xi will still host the informal talks at its Research Triangle Park headquarters, but SCONC will handle the administrative duties. These monthly gatherings are a great way to connect with the local sci-comm scene.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

In June, DCSWA began a festive summer with a happy hour to bid farewell to this year's AAAS Mass Media Fellows. DCSWA members offered plenty of helpful advice as the fellows prepared for their summer assignments. In August, DCSWA welcomed the fellows back to Washington, D.C. with another happy hour to

hear about their experiences. In July, DCSWA members gathered for mid-summer cocktails to catch up with old friends and meet new members. But the big event of the summer was DCSWA's annual summer soiree. Members took a road trip to the mountains of Pocahontas County, W.Va., to spend a weekend at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory, home to the world's largest fully steerable radio telescope and the first telescope Frank Drake used in his search for extraterrestrial life. DCSWA members toured the facilities, met with astronomers, and got a guided tour of the Green Bank Telescope, nearly 400 feet above the ground. The weekend ended with an evening star party. ■

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OUR GANG

After leading the science communications office at Ohio State University for more than three decades, **Earle Holland** officially begins his retirement in November. He will pursue a life of leisure, freelancing, leisure, consulting, and leisure—in that order. Send congratulations, assignments, and requests for consulting services to urd1234@gmail.com.

The 2012-13 class of Knight Science Journalism Fellows includes three NASW members: **Cynthia Graber**, **Joe Rojas-Burke**, and **Eli Kintisch**. Graber is a freelance radio producer and print reporter whose work appears in Public Radio International's weekly radio news magazine *The World*, *Scientific American*'s podcast *60-Second Science*, and a variety of regional and national magazines. Rojas-Burke is a staff science writer at *The Oregonian* newspaper and a contributing writer with *Consumer Reports* publications. The two will study science, health, environment, and technology at MIT during the academic year. Meanwhile, Kintisch, who is a contributing correspondent for *Science* magazine, holds the distinction of being the Knight program's first Project Fellow. As such, he is meant to "carry out a project and produce a product" during his fellowship—in this case, a project called "Bay in Flux" in which he will develop interactive tablet apps exploring how climate change is impacting Narragansett Bay. Send hearty congratulations to cynthiagraber@mac.com, joerojas@nasw.org, and elikint@gmail.com.

Two NASW members won 2012 medals for Best Articles of the Year: Higher Education from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education. **Cathy Shufro** won the grand gold award for "The Bird-Filled World of Richard Prum," which appeared in the November/December 2011 issue of *Yale Alumni Magazine*. And **Maryalice Yakutchik** snagged a bronze award for "Science of the Sexes," which appeared in the spring 2011 issue of *Johns Hopkins Public Health*. Send applause to cathy.shufro@yale.edu and myakutch@jhsph.edu.

A new Boston freelancer is making her mark. **Mary Alexandra Agner** has written pieces for *Under the Microscope* (the online component of the Women Writing Science project at The Feminist Press) and for Argonne National Laboratory. She also won funding for her book project, *Olivia and the Experiments*, on Kickstarter this summer, and is now busy with the research and writing phases of the book. Congratulate her on kickstarting her career at marymary@gmail.com.

The University of Oregon has launched a new general-research storytelling webpage at **uoresearch.uoregon.edu**. **Jim Barlow**, director of science and research communications, co-manages the page's content and says it will supplement the university's traditional news releases with stories about research and outreach. The page will highlight research efforts across campus and showcase the university research office's annual report later this fall. Write to him at jebarlow@uoregon.edu.

Freelancer **Trudy E. Bell** co-authored the first of several planned pieces with Joel R. Primack, distinguished professor of physics at the University of California at Santa Cruz. The story, "Universe on Fast Forward," graces the July 2012 cover of *Sky & Telescope* magazine, and describes how supercomputer modeling is transforming cosmology from an observational science into an experimental one. Ask her what's on the cosmological horizon at trudy_e_bell@sbcglobal.net.

Zoologist and book author **Susan J. Crockford** has started a new blog called "Polar Bear Science—Past and Present" (**polarbearscience.com**). As the title suggests, she'll avoid predictions about the species' future survival. "I've had quite enough of the obfuscation of facts and model-based extrapolations into the future with regard to polar bears," she says. "I'm pretty sure I'm not the only one who is interested in what polar bears are doing now," as well as the biological, geological, and evolutionary history of the animals and their habitat. Write Crockford at sjcrock@shaw.ca to find out if there's a polar bear book in her own future.

Texas A&M University awarded **Barbara Gastel** its 2012 Distinguished Achievement Award in the category of Extension, Outreach, Continuing Education, and Professional Development. A physician specializing in biomedical writing and editing, Gastel is professor of integrative biosciences, humanities in medicine, and biotechnology. She also coordinates the university's master's degree program in science and technology journalism. Send congratulations to BGastel@cvm.tamu.edu.

After 18 months at the Keck Observatory, on the Big Island of Hawaii, **Larry O'Hanlon** is back in the house he kept in Placitas, N.M. and working part-time for AGU managing their blogosphere and social media. He's also a correspondent for Inside Science News Service, the Santa Fe Institute, and working on an astronomy education project for USRA Universities Space Research Association). O'Hanlon is also re-starting the New Mexico Science Writers Association with an eye on taking part in the annual Albuquerque Cosmic Carnival at the International Balloon Museum, as its first event. In the past, the group has conducted a children's science-haiku contest and awarded science magazines to the winners. Contact O'Hanlon at larryohanlon@gmail.com.

Karyn Hede has added a new contract to her regular freelance assignments. She signed on to be the first news editor for the journal *Genetics in Medicine*, which is now part of Nature

GORDER COURTESY OF JO MCCULTY

Publishing Group. For an expanded front section of the journal, she'll highlight key papers in each issue and also report on other interesting news in the world of clinical genetics. Reach her at karynh@nasw.org.

Freelancer **Wendee Holtcamp** was accepted into the National Institutes of Health's Medicine in the Media fellowship program held in Potomac, Md., in early October. The NIH Office of Disease Prevention presents this annual training opportunity, which examines the challenges and opportunities inherent in the process of communicating the results of medical research to the public. It stresses an evidence-based approach and re-examines common beliefs about medicine. Get the scoop from bohemian@wendeeholtcamp.com.

Lorraine Hopping Egan reports that her NASW grant to attend the South by Southwest Interactive conference last year (coupled with a lot of push and persistence) has paid off with two new media freelance projects. She's currently editorial-directing the transmedia presence of *Inanimate Alice*, a digital novel that never ends, on Everloop (the safe social media site for tweens), along with creating materials for other sites and platforms. She also just completed a fun game-writing assignment for *Mayan Mysteries*, an archaeology video game to debut this fall. Write to her at mail@hoppingfun.com, check out *Inanimate Alice* at **inanimatealice.com**, and delve into *Mayan Mysteries* at **dig-itgames.com**.

In May, **Amy Karon** received her master's degree in journalism from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is now launching a full-time career as a freelance health and medical writer. Karon previously earned a doctorate of veterinary medicine and a master's degree in public health. Her specialties include veterinary medicine, infectious diseases, epidemiology, and mental health. Her latest project, writing about rattlesnake envenomation, has kept her up nights. Send soothing lullabies to amykaron@gmail.com.

David Levine has taken a regular freelance gig with the Brain & Behavior Research Foundation, to write about mental health issues and the foundation's grantees for its website. Read one of his recent stories, "Does Inflammation Cause Autism?" at **bbrfoundation.org** and email him at davidlevine51@gmail.com.

More news regarding **Charlotte Libov**'s article profiling stem cell advocate Sabrina Cohen. The story, "Paralyzed as a Teen, Sabrina Cohen Fights to Cure Others," previously won Cohen the "Overcoming Adversity" category of the **Examiner.com** "America Inspired" contest. Now the article has inspired *SELF* magazine to make Cohen its "Woman Doing Good" winner. In September, Cohen and Libov traveled to New York for a celebrity dinner in which the magazine awarded $10,000 to the nonprofit Sabrina Cohen Foundation for Stem Cell Research. The foundation raises research money for regenerative medicine treatments for central nervous system diseases. Write to char@libov.com to find out which celebrities she got to hobnob with.

In May, **Cheryl Platzman Weinstock** was a fellow at the Scripps Howard Institute on the Environment and Science, at Florida Atlantic University, and she is now covering the environment as well as her usual beat of health and science. She was also chosen to attend a National Press Foundation fellowship on Global Vaccines, in Atlanta. Shoot her a greeting at cherylpw@optonline.net.

Maryn McKenna has been named a senior fellow of the Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism at Brandeis University (**brandeis.edu/investigate**). It's an ongoing, non-resident fellowship that provides an institutional home for independent journalists who are working on big projects. In McKenna's case she'll use the institute's library support and student researchers to help start her next book. "I don't want to say too much about it yet, but my last one was about antibiotic resistance. Since then I have been writing a lot about the use of antibiotics in agriculture," she says. Beg for details at mmckenna@mindspring.com.

Here's your chance to read Purdue science writer **Steve Tally**'s books online: He's created a Facebook page where he will post excerpts of *Bland Ambition: From Adams to Quayle—The Cranks, Criminals, Tax Cheats, and Golfers Who Made It to Vice President,* and *Almost America: From the Colonists to Clinton: a "What If" History of the U.S.* He'll post a chapter a week, starting with the chapter on John Adams from *Bland Ambition* and a random chapter from *Almost America*, and go on from there. You'll find the page at **facebook.com/pages/Steve-Tally/19870024178** and Tally at tally@purdue.edu.

The American Geophysical Union's 2012 David Perlman Award for Excellence in Science Journalism-News goes to *Washington Post* staff science writer **Brian Vastag** for the article, "For Virginia's Fault Zone, an Event of Rare Magnitude." He'll share the award with co-author Steven Mufson and the *Post* graphics staff. The article reported on the 5.8 magnitude earthquake that shook up the Washington, D.C., region in August 2011. Judges noted that "In addition to being well-written, the article…provided a good, concise, and clear summary about the earthquake, addressed questions the public might ask about the earthquake, and…had a very impressive, fast turnaround of one day." They also called the accompanying graphic of the seismic history of the region "eye-catching, colorful, and informative." The Perlman award honors outstanding reporting on the Earth and space sciences under a deadline of one week or less. Congratulate Vastag at vastag@nasw.org.

In November, **Cathy Yarbrough** handles media relations for the American Society of Human Genetics annual meeting, in San Francisco—her first freelance assignment with that organization. In December, she'll return to The City for her seventh year managing media relations for the American Society of Cell Biology annual meeting. She spent the early summer freelancing for the *San Diego Business Journal*, where she wrote 35 bylined stories about biopharmaceutical and technology news. Write to her at sciencematter@yahoo.com.

Scientific American blogger **Bora Zivkovic** kicked off the Metcalf Institute for Marine & Environmental Reporting, in July, with a lecture on how the web is changing the way science is communicated. Zivkovic went on to lead two workshops at the institute, which is organized in partnership with Rhode Island NSF Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research and Rhode Island Sea Grant. Write to him at bora@sciam.com, and read his impressions of the event along with those of attendees at **blogs.scientificamerican.com/a-blog-around-the-clock**. ■

■ ■ ■

Our Gang seeks career news updates—whether you are a staff writer, freelance, broadcaster, blogger, editor, educator, student, or hybrid. email Pam Frost Gorder at gorder.1@osu.edu

A review copy is free to NASW members upon request!
Contact the Academy's Director of Communications Paul Karoff at PKaroff@amacad.org or 617-576-5043

Dædalus Offer for NASW Members

The American Academy of Arts & Sciences (amacad.org) wishes to better acquaint science writers with its journal *Dædalus* by offering NASW members a review copy of the summer 2012 issue titled "Science in the 21st Century."

Leading scientists describe emerging advances in nanoscience, neuroscience, genetics, paleontology, microbiology, mathematics, planetary science, and plant biology, among other areas. Authors examine how their disciplines might address some of this century's most critical challenges, such as treating an explosion of degenerative neurological disease and providing food, fuel, and a habitable environment for a global population predicted to reach nine to ten billion by 2050.

Acknowledging that predicting the future is an inherently unscientific enterprise, guest editors **Jerrold Meinwald**, the Goldwin Smith Professor of Chemistry Emeritus at Cornell University, and **May R. Berenbaum**, professor of entomology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, asked 10 physical and biological scientists to answer the question: "What secrets will science unlock in the coming decades?" Essay highlights in the volume include:

"Microbes as Menaces, Mates, and Marvels," in which **Bonnie L. Bassler** (Princeton University) offers a tribute to the lowly bacteria. She writes that "microbes are the most promising source for the next generation of environmentally and politically neutral fuels."

In "The Search for Habitable Worlds: Planetary Exploration in the 21st Century," astronomer and planetary scientist **Jim Bell** (Arizona State University) foresees huge breakthroughs within the coming decades in the quest for life-supporting environments beyond Earth.

"Small Machines," by **Paul L. McEuen** (Cornell University), describes the coming age of nanometer-scale machinery. He speculates that within 50 years "we will have solved the riddle of the origin of life and will have created a few more examples of life in the process."

In "Deciphering the Parts List for the Mechanical Plant," **Chris Somerville** (UC Berkeley) predicts that through improved breeding techniques and genetic engineering, we will be able to optimize production for many climates and soils; make plants resistant to pests, pathogens, and drought; and grow crops in saline soils.

Founded in 1780, the American Academy & Arts and Sciences is an independent policy research center that conducts multidisciplinary studies of complex and emerging problems. ■

FOIA Appeals

The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press has launched a comprehensive, online guide to appealing federal Freedom of Information Act requests (**rcfp.org/federal-foia-appeals-guide**) that will help journalists navigate the administrative process more effectively on their own. ■

ScienceWriters2012 Travel Fellows

NASW is pleased to award more than $10,000 in travel fellowships this year to assist science writers with travel and registration costs for the meeting and extend its congratulations to the following recipients:

Graduate Travel Fellowship Recipients
Alyssa Botelho, Harvard College
Elizabeth Devitt, UC Santa Cruz
Tanya Lewis, UC Santa Cruz
Melissa Pandika, Stanford University
Gabriel Popkin, Johns Hopkins University
Colin Weatherby, CUNY

2012 Freelance Travel Fellowship Recipients
Laura Beil*
Emily Coren*
Kate Shaw
Amy West
Christie Wilcox*
Sarah Zielinski*

**Additional funding from the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing awarded to these travel fellows.* ■

CASW New Horizon Fellows

CASW is awarding up to $1,200 each to help the following science writers defray the costs of attending the 2012 New Horizons in Science briefing in Raleigh, N.C.

Perrin Ireland, is an illustrator/science storyteller based in Nashville, Tenn.

Alaina G. Levine, freelance/contributor, National Geographic Society website. She resides in Tucson, Ariz.

Danielle Venton, freelance reporter/radio producer, KRCB Public Media, of Rohnert Park, Calif.

CASW also assigns a veteran science writer to each fellow to serve as a mentor during the program. ■

Gayathri Vaidyanathan

Evert Clark/ Seth Payne Award

The winner of the 2012 Evert Clark/ Seth Payne Award, an annual prize for young science journalists, is Gayathri Vaidyanathan, a writer based in Washington, D.C.

Vaidyanathan received the award and its $1,000 prize for two stories in *Nature*, "The Wheat Stalker" and "The Cultured Chimpanzees;" one story in *Greenwire*, "Study Ignites Fresh Concerns About Drilling Emissions;" and a story in *Energywire*, "Could Risk Analysis Prevent Future Deepwater Disasters?"

The panel of judges cited Vaidyanathan for sophisticated writing, enterprising on-scene reporting, and her ability to tackle a wide range of topics, from agriculture in Africa to the risks of oil and gas drilling.

The judges also awarded an honorable mention to Chris Sweeney for a cover story, "Coral Capers," in the *Broward New Times*. Sweeney used old-fashioned shoe-leather reporting and vivid characters to weave a compelling narrative about the illegal coral trade.

The award is presented by the Evert Clark Fund and NASW, in conjunction with the National Press Foundation. The ceremony will take place on Saturday, Oct. 27, during the ScienceWriters2012 meeting.

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 23nd 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 the Evert Clark website (**clark-payne.org**). ■ *(source: news release)*

2012 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 $5,000 for the academic year to both professional journalists and students of outstanding ability who have been accepted into graduate-level programs in science writing. This was a highly competitive year with 32 applications submitted; nearly double the number received in prior years. The recipients are:

Mary Chaffee, graduate from the University of Maryland, who will be attending the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth.

Laura E. Dattaro, graduate of the University of Delaware, who will be attending Columbia University Journalism School.

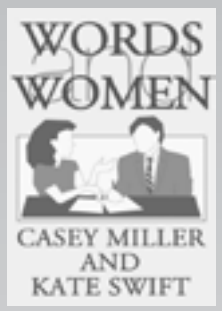
Elizabeth Devitt, graduate of the University of Vermont, who has been accepted into the UC Santa Cruz Science Communication program.

Allison McCann, graduate of New York University, who will be attending the New York University SHERP (Science, Health, and Environmental Reporting) program.

Support for this year's fellowships comes from CASW and The Brinson Foundation (**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 the American Tentative Society (ATS); and Alton Blakeslee, *AP* science editor, who served as long-time president of ATS. Fellowship application and eligibility requirements can be found at **casw.org**. ■

In 1970, NASW member Kate Swift was editing a junior high school sex-ed book when she noticed something was wrong—almost all of the pronouns were masculine. She made it her business to fix that. In 1976, she co-authored *Words and Women*, followed in 1980, by *The Handbook of Nonsexist Writing*, in an attempt to start spreading the word that pronouns matter. These two landmark books by the late Kate Swift (see page 26 obit) and her partner Casey Miller remain as relevant today as they were when first published nearly four decades ago. Both books have been updated and are available as e-books.

Landmark Books by NASW Member



Words and Women is lauded as a world-changing look at how the English language has perpetuated gender biases.

In *The Handbook of Nonsexist Writing* Swift and Miller wrote: "The need today, as always, is to be in command of language, not used by it, and so the challenge is to find clear, convincing, graceful ways to say accurately what we want to say." ■

In Memoriam

Raymond F. Shanahan
General Electric R&D Science Writer

Raymond F. Shanahan, 97, of Clifton Park, N.Y., died on April 13.

Shanahan was born in 1914, in Auburn, NY. After obtaining his bachelor's degree in science from Syracuse University, he served in the U.S. Army during WWII. Following the war, he enjoyed a 30-year career as a science writer for General Electric Co. Research and Development. He had been a NASW member since 1978.

Joye Patterson
Journalism Professor

Joye Patterson, Ph.D., 86, professor emeritus, University of Missouri School of Journalism, died April 16, after a short respiratory illness. She had been a NASW member since 1967.

Patterson's work was instrumental in the development of the field of science journalism in universities throughout the United States and other nations. She frequently consulted about the public's understanding of science and biomedical issues for the National Science Foundation and the National Library of Medicine.

Born in Arkansas in 1925, Patterson received a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas-Austin. After receiving a master's degree and doctorate from the Missouri School of Journalism, she joined the school's faculty in 1965 and retired in 1998. A renowned mentor to a generation of science journalists and faculty peers, the Missouri School of Journalism's Smith-Patterson Fellowship and Lecture Series is co-named for her.

■ ■ ■

***ScienceWriters* has learned belatedly of the deaths of the following NASW members:**

Mildred Spencer Sanes
Science and Medical Writing Pioneer; Former NASW President

Mildred Spencer Sanes, died March 31, 2011, at the age of 93.

Born Mildred D. Spencer, in 1918, in Rochester, N.Y., she earned a bachelor's degree in journalism at the University of Illinois and became a reporter at a time when female journalists weren't common and their role was mainly confined to the society and homemaking pages. Sanes joined the reporting staff of *The Buffalo Evening News* in 1941. With the outbreak of WWII, many of her male colleagues left to serve in the military and Sanes got the chance to report for just about every part of the paper. Sanes took on the medical beat for *The News* because no one else wanted it. She reported it all, achieving an expertise that enabled her to make highly technical stories understandable to the average reader. Sanes also was a pioneer in developing TV and radio medical news programming. She joined NASW in 1957 and served as its president from 1965 to 1966.

Kate Swift
Writer, Editor, Pioneer in Feminist Analysis of Language

Kate Swift, 87, a writer and editor who was a pioneer in the feminist analysis of language, died on May 7, 2011, in Middletown, Conn., after a brief illness. She joined NASW in 1965.

Barbara Peabody Swift, always known as Kate, was born in 1923 to parents who were newspaper and magazine journalists, and obtained her own journalism degree from the University of North Carolina, in 1944. She worked as a news writer for the Museum of Natural History and press liaison for the Hayden Planetarium, editor for the Army's information and education department, public relations officer for the Girl Scouts of America, and director of the news bureau of the Yale School of Medicine.

In the 1970s, Swift formed a freelance editorial service with her life partner Casey Miller; their clients were nonprofit institutions in the fields of education, health care, and environmental issues. It was a period of increasing awareness of common language practices that ignored or denigrated women, and while editing a sex-education program for junior-high students they realized that the materials spoke to "men," "boys," and "him." Swift and Miller made sure that girls and women were visible in the text, and were motivated to write an article on sexist language for the first issue of *Ms.* magazine ("Desexing the English Language") and later for *The New York Times Magazine* ("One Small Step for Genkind").

Swift and Miller co-authored *Words and Women* (1976), a world-changing book that demonstrated conclusively that our everyday words disparaged and discriminated against women. When trying to get their book published in 1973, it was rejected by one editor because, they were told, "the women's movement has peaked." Later they published *The Handbook of Nonsexist Writing* (1980), explaining, "Conventional English usage, including the generic use of masculine-gender words, often obscures the actions, the contributions, and sometimes the very presence of women. Turning our backs on that insight is an option, of course, but it is an option like teaching children that the world is flat."

Kenneth Weaver
National Geographic Science Editor

Kenneth Weaver, 94, of Lawrence, Kan., died Sept. 20, 2010. He was a NASW member since 1961.

Born in 1915, near Grand Junction, Colo., Weaver graduated from Clovis High School in Clovis, N.M., and from McPherson College in McPherson, Kan., in 1937. He taught high school in Kansas for a few years then moved to Washington, D.C., in 1941. Weaver worked as a writer for several organizations before joining

ScienceWriters Welcomes Letters to the Editor

A letter must include a daytime telephone number and email address. Letters submitted may be used in print or digital form by NASW, and may be edited.

Mail to:
Editor, *ScienceWriters*
P.O. Box 1725
Solana Beach, CA 92075

email to:
editor@nasw.org

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To apply, visit kwfellows.org or email kwfellows@umich.edu.

Serving as headquarters is the **Mike and Mary Wallace House**, a graceful, spacious home, given to the U-M by the late CBS newsman and his wife.

Win the Top Prize for Young Journalists

The LIVINGSTON
Awards For Young Journalists

THREE $10,000 PRIZES ARE GIVEN EACH YEAR for the best print, broadcast or online coverage of local, national, and international news by journalists 34 and younger in any U.S. controlled outlet. The Livingstons, whose purpose is to recognize and further develop the abilities of young journalists, are the largest all-media, general reporting prizes in the country.

For information and entry forms, visit livawards.org or email livingstonawards@umich.edu.

JUDGES: Christiane Amanpour, CBE, ABC News and CNN; **Ken Auletta**, the *New Yorker*; **Dean Baquet**, the *New York Times*; **Charles Gibson**, ABC News; **Ellen Goodman**, author and columnist; **John F. Harris**, Politico; **Clarence Page**, the *Chicago Tribune*; **Anna Quindlen**, *Newsweek*

Entry deadlines: February 1, 2013

The University of Michigan's Wallace House:
Nurturing the Talents of Journalists

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

the staff of *National Geographic* magazine, in 1952, where he rose to senior assistant editor and served as science editor for 20 years before retiring in 1985. During his tenure, he wrote many widely acclaimed articles about science and the American space program, including the Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo programs, for which he won more than a dozen national awards. In addition to his NASW membership, Weaver served as president of the Aviation/Space Writers Association.

Norman Jacobson, 94, who resided outside of Chicago, died in 2009. A graduate of the journalism school of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Jacobson had a lifelong career in technical editing and publishing that included stints with the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, Argonne National Laboratory, and the American Nuclear Society. He joined NASW in 1967.

Paul Martin, 87, of La Grange Park, Ill., died in 2009. He joined NASW in 1981.

R. Nelson Fuller, 93, of Morro Bay, Calif., died in 2005. He was a public affairs officer at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, from 1965 to 1978. He joined NASW in 1968.

Courtney Anderson, 94, of Barrington, R.I., died in 2001. She joined NASW in 1966.

Herbert Shaw, 81, of Prospect Harbor, Maine, died in 1996. He joined NASW in 1954.

Richard H. Gilluly, of Billings, Mont., dead at the age of 80. He joined NASW in 1968. ■

Elsevier ScienceDirect

New benefit for NASW members

NASW members are eligible to receive free access to Elsevier's ScienceDirect. This resource allows users, including credentialed reporters, to access a large database of full-text articles from over 2,500 scientific and medical journals, including *Cell* and *The Lancet*, and 11,000 books. An app is also available so you can access ScienceDirect on your mobile device.

To set up Elsevier access, NASW members should send an email to Tinsley Davis at director@nasw.org.

Subject Line:	NASW Member ScienceDirect Access
Type in body of email:	*Your full name* *Your email address* *This statement:* "By sending this email and requesting access, I certify that I am a current member of the National Association of Science Writers."

Weekly, NASW will forward requests to Elsevier. Elsevier will contact you with a username and password.

Special thanks to NASW member David Levine for helping set up access to this resource and to Elsevier for facilitating the process. ■

Happy Second Anniversary, Retraction Watch

We didn't plan it this way, but our second anniversary gift came a few days early, when we learned that a retraction notice had cited us. Given that the traditional second anniversary gift is cotton, and we're really not sure what to do with that information, we're much happier—and humbled—by the mention.

Two years ago, we launched Retraction Watch (**retractionwatch.wordpress.com**). When we looked back at year one, we had written more than 250 posts; that number is up to more than 600. We had a new record holder in our first year, Joachim Boldt, with 88 retractions; we now have a new one, Yoshitaka Fujii, with 172 likely. This July, we crossed the three million-page view threshold and also saw our first 300,000-page view month.

But numbers don't always tell the whole story, and one thing we have been particularly proud of is the support of our growing core of readers. Their—your—response and encouragement has helped us gain exposure, with invited articles by us in *Nature*, the *Boston Globe*, and *The Scientist*, for example, testimony at the National Academy of Sciences, invited talks at conferences and institutions, and more. Your comments and tips—productive, provocative, and yes, at times infuriating—have helped us create a far more robust and consequential site. To which we say a most heartfelt: Thanks!

We doubt that in the coming year anyone will come along to trump Boldt and Fujii with yet another record holder for retractions, so we won't promise that. But we will be introducing several new features to the blog. The first is what we are calling the Transparency Index, a way, as we put it in *The Scientist*, to judge journals on how willing they are to share information about their decision making process with their readers.

We're also going to offer a membership to the site, so that our readers, in addition to the tremendous support they've already given us with criticisms, tips, and spreading the word, have the opportunity to support our efforts to create a robust and user-friendly database of retractions, corrections, and other updates to the literature.

We'll have more about that—think an NPR model, content available to everyone regardless of whether you support us—once we've got the technology in place, so stay tuned. In the meantime, feel free to stop by the Retraction Watch Store (**bit.ly/UimRkO**) and our Facebook page (**on.fb.me/rOiZlH**) for that matter.

Some of the funds from memberships, we should note, will go to pay guest bloggers. You may have noticed Trevor Stokes' great posts. Trevor, an accomplished science writer, came to us wanting to contribute, and was undeterred when we told him we couldn't pay. But we'd like to be able to offer him—and other contributors—something once we have revenue. On to year three. Thanks again! ■

"Happy Second Anniversary, Retraction Watch: Plus, Our Plans for Year Three," Retraction Watch, posted Aug. 3, 2012.

Ivan Oransky is executive editor of Reuters Health. He is the founder of Retraction Watch and Embargo Watch.

Charlie Petit is Virginia Tech Visiting Scholar

Charlie Petit, the founding writer for the MIT Knight Science Journalism Tracker, and an award-winning writer and editor, with more than four decades of experience covering science, technology, medicine, and the environment, is this year's Virginia Tech's College of Engineering Visiting Scholar.

During a two-day visit, in October, he will present "The Science Writing Game…or, Everybody's Got a Story." His talk will be open to Virginia Tech faculty, staff, students, and the public.

Petit has been on the science and technology beat since 1970, including 26 years at the *San Francisco Chronicle*. At the *Chronicle* he broke news that the universe is not only expanding, but is accelerating outward. He has been on assignment in the stratosphere, 3,600 feet under the sea, the Arctic, and the Antarctic.

He joined the staff at *U.S. News & World Report* in 1998, and in 2005 became primarily a freelance writer. Since 2005, his articles have appeared in *National Geographic*, *Smithsonian Magazine*, *Nature*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *Science News*, and the *New York Times*. One of his *Science News* stories, "Stellar Oddballs," is included in the just-published, annual anthology *Best American Science Writing 2012* (see page 15 of this issue).

Charlie Petit

In 2011, Petit won the Robert C. Cowen Award for Sustained Achievement in Science Journalism, given by the American Geophysical Union. This award recognizes a journalist for "significant, lasting, and consistent contributions to accurate reporting or writing" for the general public on Earth and space sciences.

Petit's other honors include two AAAS science journalism awards for his work on newspapers and on magazines. He received the 2003 American Geophysical Union's news writing award, the 1991 American Institute of Physics' prize, the 1990 Science in Society Award from NASW, and regional prizes from the American Heart Association and San Francisco Press Club.

Petit is a former president of NASW and the Northern California Science Writers Association. He was an instructor at the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California at Berkeley and is on the board of the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing.

The Virginia Tech visiting scholar program, called the Jebson-Nystrom Science and Technology Writer in Residence Endowment, is funded by a gift from engineering alumnus Bob Jebson, of Culpeper, Va., a 1956 metallurgical engineering graduate and a member of the College of Engineering's Committee of 100.

An admirer of technology communication, Jebson directed a $50,000 gift to the College of Engineering's public relations program and helped develop the guidelines that call for a nationally recognized science and technology writer to spend a few days on campus each year. ■

(source: news release)

Request for Submissions

Honoring and encouraging outstanding investig

2013 Science in Society Journalism Awards

Entries are online!

No more paperclips, staples, and photocopies. With online entries, you save time, hassle, and stamps.

Enter Your Work at nasw.org/scienceinsociety

Entries Open:
November 28, 2012

Entries Close:
February 1, 2013 11:59PM EST

The Purpose

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 on society. NASW especially encourages entries of critical, probing pieces that would not receive an award from an interest group. Beginning with the first award in 1972, previous winners have demonstrated innovative reporting that goes well beyond the science itself and into the ethical problems and social implications. A committee of accomplished peers judges the entries each year.

Categories for 2013*

- **Books**
- **Commentary and Opinion**
- **Science Reporting**
- **Science Reporting for a Local or Regional Market**

**These are subject to change somewhat for 2013. Final details available online in November.*

ative and interpretive reporting about the sciences and their impact on society

The Awards

NASW will award separate cash prizes of $2,500 for writing judged best in each of four categories: books, commentary or opinion, science reporting, and science reporting with a local or regional focus. With the exception of the book category, prizes will be platform independent. We're open to entries from print, broadcast, and online journalists. Winners and their publishers/broadcasters will also receive certificates. The 2013 awards will be presented at an awards dinner the weekend of November 2, 2013, in Gainesville, Florida. Reasonable travel and hotel expenses of the award winners will be reimbursed. In cases of multiple authors or producers, only one person's expenses will be covered.

Eligibility

Any writer (or team) is eligible to submit one entry in each category. Except in the book category, an entry will consist of a maximum of three articles or broadcasts on separate topics or a single series. Work must be written or spoken in English, intended for the adult lay person, and first published or broadcast in North America between Jan. 1, 2012, and Dec. 31, 2012. Winners of last year's awards and individuals who have won three times are not eligible.

Rules for Submission

- Only online entries will be accepted.
- Detailed rules for submission, including handling of books and multimedia, can be found at nasw.org/scienceinsociety Please follow the rules carefully. Submissions that do not follow these procedures will not be considered.
- Entries must meet the purpose stated above. Material about significant advances in science, no matter how well written, will be ineligible if the relevance to the broader society is unclear. If you wish, you may include a cover letter of not more than one page explaining why the entry deserves to win the Science in Society Award. Any person, including the author, may submit material. There is no submission fee.

Science in Society Awards Committee Chairs

NASW extends a special thanks to Amber Dance and Dennis Meredith and our volunteer screeners and judges.

Want to know more?

- If you have questions, contact NASW Executive Director Tinsley Davis at director@nasw.org or (510) 647-9500.
- Read about the 2012 winners in this issue of *ScienceWriters* (see page 4).
- Past winners, including some judges' comments, are posted at nasw.org/awards.

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Complete contact information available at **nasw.org**

NEW MEMBERS

ARIZONA: Alexandra Nicodemo, Arizona State Univ., Tempe. **CALIFORNIA**: Rina Shaikh-Lesko*, UC Santa Cruz; Elizabeth Devitt*, UC Santa Cruz; Leyla Kazvin*, Patexia, Inc., Encino; Whitney Barlow, freelance, Glendale; Kathryn Bowers, freelance, Los Angeles; Victoria Costello, PLOS, Pacifica; Edward Lempinen, AAAS, Pleasant Hill; Laurel Rogers, U.S. Geological Survey, San Diego; Kelly Servick*, UC Santa Cruz; Tamsin Woolley-Barker*, UCSD Extension, San Diego. **COLORADO**: Beth Bartel*, Univ. of Colorado, Boulder; Stephanie Pappas, LiveScience.com, Denver; David Tauchen, Colorado School of Mines, Denver; John Williams, freelance, Golden; Natasha Vizcarra, National Snow and Ice Data Center, Louisville. **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**: Amy Grossman*, World Bank. **FLORIDA**: Katherine Kinsley-Momberger, Univ. of Florida, Gainesville; Kristy Shimp*, Univ. of Florida/College of Medicine, Gainesville. **GEORGIA**: Kathryn Shepard*, Emory Univ., Decatur. **ILLINOIS**: Jessica Love, Univ. of Illinois at Urbana Champaign; Jim Michalski, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Chicago; Susan Galatzer-Levy, Univ. of Illinois at Chicago, Evanston. **MARYLAND**: Ana DePina, Johns Hopkins Univ.; Carolyn Graybeal, freelance, Bethesda. **MASSACHUSETTS**: Kathy Wren, AAAS, Arlington; Jacqueline Mitchell, Tufts Univ., Brookline; Alyssa Botelho*, Harvard College, Cambridge; Stefanie Friedhoff, Nieman Foundation, Cambridge; Kevin Jiang*, Boston Univ., Cambridge; Mary Alexandra Agner, freelance, Somerville; Karina GordinV, Mass. College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, Wayland. **MICHIGAN**: Cynthia Schoen*, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Kamali Sripathi*, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor. **MONTANA**: David Quammen, freelance, Bozeman. **NEW MEXICO**: Sue Holmes, Sandia Nat'l Labs., Albuquerque. **NEW YORK**: Asif Patel*, freelance, Bronx; Kristen French*, Columbia Univ. School of Journalism, NYC; Sophia Li, freelance, Brooklyn; Mary Fiess, Univ. at Albany, Delmar; Kelsey O'Connor*, *The Ithacan*, Ithaca; Ashley Tucker*, St. John's Univ., Kew Gardens; Maria Konnikova, freelance, NYC; Danielle Sedbrook*, Columbia Univ., NYC; Andrew Wiecek, *BioTechniques*, NYC; John Hastings, freelance, Purdys; Peter Iglinski, Univ. of Rochester; Gregory Sawchuk*, Binghamton Univ., Scarsdale; Andrew Grant, *Discover* magazine, Seaford. **NORTH CAROLINA**: Sarah Farmer*, Univ. of North Carolina Asheville; Daniel Lane*, UNC Chapel Hill; Sara Peach, freelance, Carrboro; Natalie Taylor*, UNC Chapel Hill School of Journalism; Jessica Wilson, North Carolina State Univ., Cary; Courtni Kopietz*, UNC Chapel Hill; Patrick Mustain*, UNC School of Journalism, Chapel Hill; Christian Russell*, Greensboro College; Lauren Neighbours*, UNC Chapel Hill, Mebane; E-Ching Lee, No. Carolina Sea Grant, Raleigh; Heather Patisaul, NC State Univ., Raleigh; Daniel Riechers, freelance, Raleigh; Sharon Settlage*, No. Carolina Sea Grant, Raleigh. **OREGON**: Maria Garcia*, Oregon State Univ., Corvallis; Julia Rosen*, Oregon State Univ., Corvallis. **PENNSYLVANIA**: Rebeca Tenney*, Univ. of Pennsylvania, Phila.; Cristy Gelling*, Carnegie Mellon Univ., Pittsburgh; Tim Palucka, Materials Research Society, Pittsburgh; Joshua Yearsley*, Penn State Univ., State College. **RHODE ISLAND**: Sara MacSorley*, Univ. of Rhode Island, Kingston; Clayton Aldern*, Brown Univ., Providence; Meredith Haas, Rhode Island Sea Grant, Providence. **TENNESSEE**: Abby Olena*, Vanderbilt Univ., Nashville. **TEXAS**: Traci Peterson, Univ. of Texas at Arlington; M. Brady Sylvan*, St. Edward's Univ., Austin; John Davis, Texas Tech Univ., Lubbock **VIRGINIA**: Heather Grandelli*, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg; Matthew Francis, freelance, Richmond. **WASHINGTON**: Nancy Gohring, Univ. of Washington, Seattle; Priscilla Long, freelance, Seattle; Andrea Watts*, Univ. of Washington, Seattle. **WEST VIRGINIA**: Diandra Leslie-Pelecky, West Virginia Univ., Morgantown. **WISCONSIN**: Scott Johnson, freelance, Madison; James Spartz*, U.S. Forest Service, Madison; David Steinkraus, freelance, Racine. **CANADA**: **ALBERTA**: Megan Kopp, freelance, Cochrane. **BRITISH COLUMBIA**: Eve Rickert, Talk Science to Me Inc., Vancouver. **ONTARIO**: CarolAnne Black*, Dalhousie Univ., Ottawa. **GERMANY**: John Uhlrich, Wiley-VCH, Mannheim. **UNITED KINGDOM**: Joanna Carpenter, freelance, Beckenham; Akshat Rathi*, freelance, London. ■

**student member*

SCIENCE IN SOCIETY

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Adam Rogers (*Wired*) and Evelyn Strauss (Multiple Sclerosis Discovery Forum).

NASW established the Science in Society Journalism Awards to provide recognition without subsidy from any professional or commercial interest for investigative or interpretive reporting about the sciences and their impact on society. 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. ■

(Source: NASW news release)

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Deadline for the 2013 Science in Society Journalism Awards is Feb. 1, 2013. Eligibility requirements and submission procedures outlined on page 30 of this issue and at nasw.org/scienceinsociety.

COHN PRIZE

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Cohen earned his B.A. from the University of California, San Diego. From 1986 until he joined *Science*, he was senior editor at the *City Paper*, in Washington, D.C. Cohen lives in Cardiff-by-the Sea, Calif., with his wife, TV producer Shannon Bradley, and their three children.

Jon Cohen will receive the $3,000 check and a certificate in Raleigh, N.C., on Saturday, Oct. 27, at an awards ceremony held in conjunction with ScienceWriters2012; the annual joint meeting of the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing (CASW) and NASW.

This year marks the 13th presentation of the Victor Cohn Prize for Excellence in Medical Science

Reporting, for a body of work published or broadcast within the past five years. The award honors the late *Washington Post* medical writer and health columnist Victor Cohn, who distinguished himself by the clarity and effectiveness of his reporting during a 50-year career.

Cohn was a co-founder, in 1959, of CASW.

The award is administered by CASW. This year's entries were judged by CASW president Cristine Russell, a freelance writer and senior fellow at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government; Joann Rodgers, a freelance writer and faculty scholar at the Johns Hopkins Berman Institute of Bioethics; and Ben Patrusky, CASW executive director. ■
(source: CASW news release)

CURIOSITY

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and turning the pages of the notebook as I scribbled, making marginal notes on my news copy, through the comments section of the *Journal*'s website.

Through the live video-streaming of Ustream.tv, JPL online channels, and NASA's own website, many of them even attended the same JPL press briefings that I did and eavesdropped on the same control-room commentary. In fact, more than one-third of all NASA's webcast streams in the last eight years occurred in the 48 hours around the Curiosity landing—36.4 million webcast streams in just two days, according to JPL social media manager Veronica McGregor. The traffic level peaked at 1.2 million webcast streams, double the previous record for a NASA event.

For my part, I filed an in-depth advance article on the mission and the problems facing NASA's Mars exploration program, two video mini-documentaries on the Curiosity rover and its mission, radio interviews for the *Journal*'s own network, several news stories for the *Journal*'s website, then a front page story for our print editions. At 3 a.m., after the landing, with little to eat but a bag of "good-luck" mission peanuts, I found myself doing a live interview with our China bureau as part of the *Journal*'s web TV programming efforts.

In spare moments, I tweeted and posted on Facebook.

At times, though, it seemed my stiffest competition for public attention was not my colleagues at the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, or *Los Angeles Times*, but McGregor and her social media team who artfully phrased tweets in the name of the Mars Curiosity robot rover.

By design, they turned the intricate six-wheeled machine into a pert and lively heroine in an unfolding interplanetary drama. At the moment of touchdown, they tweeted through their @MarsCuriosity account: "Gale Crater. I am in you." That 140-character message was relayed by other Twitter users 72,000 times.

"To put that in perspective, before the landing we would have considered 700 retweets outstanding," McGregor said.

In all, the Curiosity rover's Twitter followers rose from 120,000 people the day before the landing to more than 1.2 million people the following day. In the weeks since, other Curiosity tweets have been relayed and repeated tens of thousands of times.

At the same time, the mission website received 127 million page views—about 20 times the page views during a normal 48-hour period, according to McGregor.

In the end, it was a good news moment for a space agency beleaguered by budgets cuts and self-doubt. At the JPL post-landing press conference, dozens of exuberant, high-fiving NASA engineers and mission scientists in sky-blue, landing-team shirts wove their way between reporters in a congratulatory conga line.

"Every one of the folks came up and gave me a big hug," said Halvorson. "They were exuding this pure joy."

For science reporters too, it was an emotional moment.

"It was the relief of having a successful mission and not having to write about a failure," said Boyle. "It was such a powerful emotional release that it leaves a mark on you." ■

SHURKIN

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or shared Pulitzers. For several years, we worked together, ate together, drank together with all the dynamics of a family. There was at least one marriage (long and happy) and several affairs (short and complicated). Many of us have remained friends ever since.

We had a huge room for a press center. There were no cell phones or computers, of course, and I did the mathematical calculations needed (mostly nautical miles to statute miles) on a slide rule, occasionally misplacing a decimal. If you went out to dinner, you phoned your desk to tell them where they could reach you.

Despite the perks, the job could be stressful. During Apollo 13, the flight that almost ended in catastrophe, the *Associated Press*, for reasons unknown, decided reality needed some adjustment. I saw one colleague in tears, trying to explain on the phone to his desk in Miami that his calm and deliberate story was more accurate than what they were seeing on the *AP* wire. It was a contemporary analog to the current meme that if it is on the Internet it must be true. In those days, if it came over the Teletype it must be true even if it contradicted your own reporter.

London, watching *AP* get most of the play in the world's newspapers, started tinkering with our ledes. My staff and I rebelled and threatened to quit on the spot unless they left our stories alone. Paterson, a thoroughly ethical journalist, agreed with us and made a phone call. The sub-editor on the desk in London was reassigned.

And we could create history as well as report it. When Armstrong stepped down on the lunar surface he said either "That is one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind," or "That's one small step for a man…." The air-to-ground transmission was fuzzy.

Seems minor but it would be one of the most famous quotes in history, and we could not be sure what the words were. We also could not be inconsistent among ourselves. So, about a half dozen of us gathered in the newsroom and decided he did not have the "a" before "man" and that's the way it went out to all the outlets.

It turns out that when they cleaned up the transmission, we were right, he had accidentally dropped the "a." But by then, it didn't matter; we wrote the history. ■

SCHOLARLY PURSUITS

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influences can influence a scientific debate in a dynamic network. The author analyzes media coverage of sociobiology in the German press during two different time periods: 1975 to 1980 and 1990 to 1995. The author chose this initial time period on account of the highly charged academic debate that ensued following the 1975 publication of Edward O. Wilson's book *Sociobiology—The New Synthesis*. This nature versus nurture debate was deeply colored in Germany by cultural experiences with eugenics and racism. In the United States, this debate played out in popular culture in conjunction with the academic debate, while thought leaders widely engaged in public forums. This was not the case in all societies, however.

According to the author's analysis, the sociobiology debate was largely absent in the German media until 1996, decades after the debate had played out in other countries. By the time this debate appears in the German media, it is greatly detached from the academic debate and presented as a very neutral concept. The author posits that the rise of the debate in Germany was linked to the broader discussion of life sciences related to cloning, stem cells, and biomedicine. The positive atmosphere that existed around these discussions thus created a safe space where this concept could be introduced, but even then it was often discussed solely in a metaphorical sense.

Linke speculates that at a broad level, this lag in media attention is the result of a population widely affected by the history of the Third Reich. In this "spectre of eugenics," Germans became averse to any discussion that came anywhere near eugenics or social Darwinism. However, when the intellectual debate emerged following Wilson's publication, there were some deeper issues at play in the German academic community. The leading German academic in the field, Konrad Lorenz, was diametrically opposed to Wilson's work, but was essentially the sole German academic with any expertise on the matter. Unfortunately, he was not in a position to initiate a debate on the matter. Lorenz had very strong ties to the Nazi party, a matter of great criticism when he received the Nobel Prize in 1973. Wilson had been accused in the American press of trying to revive theories that led to the rise of Nazi Germany, and Lorenz chose to sit out of the debate to avoid similar backlash. Without a credible spokesperson to initiate the debate against Wilson, and a cadre of journalists averse to discussing the topic, the debate simply got left behind.

Taken together, these three articles reaffirm the importance of science writers in bringing socially salient issues to the attention of a wide range of audiences. But they also demonstrate that the path from science writing into social fabric is neither easy nor predictable. Thought leaders will often bring an issue to the table, but sometimes cultural constraints don't allow these issues to be integrated into a broader societal dialogue. In the absence of information (accurate or not), societies will sit divided on an issue: Science writers can provide the rationale for decisions, but true public engagement with science and technology requires that a far more expansive set of actors become engaged. ■

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Science in Society entries are online only.

Entries are accepted for work published in 2012.

2013 Science in Society Journalism Awards

Awards of $2,500 for each category.

Categories: Books, Commentary and Opinion, Science Reporting, and Science Reporting for a Local or Regional Market*.

Enter Your Work • ***Entries Open:*** **November 28, 2012** • ***Entries Close:*** **February 1, 2013 11:59PM EST**

Enter online at **nasw.org/scienceinsociety** • ***See page 30 for more information***

*These are subject to change somewhat for 2013. Final details available online in November.