

The Newsletter of The National Association of

ScienceWriters

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LAURA VAN DAM A REMEMBRANCE

by Lynne Friedmann

NASW mourns the death of President Laura van Dam, 51, who died on April 24 after a long and courageous battle with central nervous system lymphoma.

I mourn the loss of a friend I came to know in a unique NASW manner. Years ago at an AAAS meeting I wandered down to the hotel lobby, as evening approached, for the customary see-who's-around-and-figure-out-dinner-plans gathering of science writers. That night freelance writer

Jane Stevens, Laura (with whom I had a nodding acquaintance at the time), and I would share a table and start a tradition. It was a highly enjoyable evening, so much so that by the time the check arrived Laura insisted the three of us have dinner again at the next AAAS meeting...and the next...and the next. Soon making travel arrangements for the annual meeting meant first checking on Laura and Jane's availability for dinner.

Posting to Laura's memorial page on the NASW Web site, Jane wrote, "I can hear her voice now, her soft chortle when her wry sense of humor bubbled up, which was often. She so enjoyed life, her family, and her friends."

Make no mistake, Laura enjoyed life and reveled in being part of NASW.

An independent book editor, Laura spent many years as a senior editor with Houghton Mifflin Company, where she specialized in books related to science, technology, medicine, and health. Her authors included Natalie Angier (*Woman: An Intimate Geography*), Daniel Schacter (*The Seven Sins of Memory*), J. Richard Gott (*Time Travel Through Einstein's Universe*), and Steve Olson (*Mapping Human History*, a National Book Award finalist).

Earlier in her career Laura served as a senior editor with the MIT publication *Technology Review* and as a newspaper reporter.

When Laura was elected a NASW board member in 1997, and later became an officer, I had the opportunity to discover another side of her as she bubbled over with ambitious ideas for the organization—many of which have come to fruition.

Throughout her illness, Laura fulfilled her responsibilities to NASW in the face of overwhelming personal difficulties with courage, determination, generosity, humor, and dignity. In rereading e-mail messages sent in her final months, I'm struck by her uniformly positive, cheerful tone. That, and her smile, are the way I'll always remember her.

Lynne Friedmann is editor of ScienceWriters.

COVER PHOTO BY HOWARD SAXNER





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SUBMISSION DEADLINES

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[Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from the eulogy given by NASW past president Deborah Blum at Laura van Dam's memorial service.]

I've always thought of science writers as a rather peculiar branch on the family tree of journalism. There just aren't that many people who want to spend their days wrestling with how best to describe the valence shell of an atom or cholesterol-based structure of a sex hormone. And that includes the people we live with.

My husband has been known to loudly inform me that he really doesn't want to know any more about his liver. It's one of the reasons, I suspect, that science writers tend to be a rather close family. When we get together we are, at last, with those who will listen to our liver descriptions, our tales of research journals and intractable researchers, and who will laugh with us, and commiserate, and ask for more details about the liver.

Laura was a loved member of the science writing family. When NASW created an online memorial immediately after her death people literally flooded the site—journalists from small papers and large ones, magazines and radio networks, universities and science associations.

And what they wrote over and over again were stories of Laura's kindness, her unstinting care for others even during her own terrible illness. A few of those comments:

From Jeffery Robbins, of Joseph Henry Press: "While going through the most recent, and ultimately tragic, phase of her illness, she temporarily forgot her troubles to sympathize with and support me as I went through a less serious one. I'll never forget that."

From freelance writer Craig Hicks: "Laura was an incredible source of encouragement for me when my father was diagnosed with cancer and family obligations made it difficult for me to balance the demands of freelance work with my job as NASW cybrarian."

Member Sidney Perkowitz said he had a brush with a serious illness and had a long talk with Laura about what it takes to survive times like that. "She set an example of quiet fortitude, and most important, of holding on to whatever humor, joy, and pleasure in one's work that a person can find in terrible times."

And Julie Miller, editor of *Science News*, told us that when she was being treated for breast cancer, Laura wrote her every week to encourage her and see how she was doing, even while Laura herself was ill.

NASW members also wrote about how Laura encouraged them as young science writers trying to build a career and as long-time science writers wrestling with the next difficult project or trying their hand at something new. "Were it not for the breaks and encouragement she gave me, as a novice writer, I might easily be doing something else right now," said Steve Nadis.

Speaking for myself, every book I wrote, she would call me up to assure me that it was better than the last one, that I was growing as a writer, that she thought I

was on to bigger and better things. No one made me feel like the next best thing like Laura did. She was that rare commodity in a competitive and jealous profession—the owner of a generous heart, one that rejoiced in the achievements of others.

I can speak personally to her incredible ability to care for and take care of others. Last year, my oldest son was sick enough to require brain surgery. Laura hovered over us like a guardian angel. She scoured the bookstores for things for him to read in the hospital and searched to find me a good pair of fluffy slippers because she wanted me to have something that would comfort me and make me laugh. I wore them every day this week. They do always make me feel better, feel loved.

The fact that Laura was so brave and so determined could sometimes make you forget how sick she was. And the fact that she was a lovely person could sometimes make you forget how smart she was, a gifted and effective science writer and editor and leader.

I had the privilege of working on the NASW board with her. She was tireless in her efforts to make the organization less isolationist, connecting us with other journalism organizations. Laura pushed to make us citizens of the world, for example, working with the World Federation of Science Journalists on her own time and helping craft the first international meeting of that organization.

Rest in Peace

Laura van Dam, who had lived in Cambridge, Mass., asked to be buried under a pine tree to stay close to the natural world she always embraced.

"To walk with her in the woods was a privilege, because she knew everything and she loved it all," said her husband, Howard Saxner. "To be with her in the woods was to experience someone's spirit in the purest sense. She was at home."

Born in Madison, N.J., Laura graduated from Rutgers University with a bachelor's degree in environmental studies. She worked for a time at Garden in the Woods, in Framingham, Mass., and was enthralled with all parts of nature, not just the eye-catching beauty.

"She was the one who would take kids and try to get them excited about skunk cabbage," her husband said.

To honor his wife's wishes, Saxner found a place in Mount Auburn Cemetery where she could be buried under a pine tree.

(Source: Boston Globe obituary)

During her tenure as president, NASW continually changed for the better. In addition to the publication of a second edition of *A Field Guide for Science Writers*, Laura oversaw one of the biggest changes in the organization's history, the creation of a stand-alone national meeting. Both I and the meeting organizer Tinsley Davis can testify to the fact that Laura paid attention to big details and small in assuring that success and in pursuing a goal she believed in—the training of a new generation of science writers who will be better and smarter than our generation.

They owe her, we owe her, I owe her more than I can tell you. The world will be less bright without you, Laura. We miss you already. Grace go with you.

Other Remembrances of Laura van Dam

Laura and I met about two decades ago and each visit to Boston would be an opportunity for us to share tea and talk. When she got sick, we had many long talks and then she got well and then sick again, and again. All throughout, she was upbeat and it was always inspirational to see how well she handled her continuing battle. Last month, she called to say that her memory was shot but that she could recall how much fun she had during our visits. Well, Laura, you taught me how to live each day, and enjoy the living. And for that, I pick up my tea cup and toast you, my dear friend. You are missed today and forever more.—*Jamie Talan*

I can't recall when I first met Laura, but in every memory I have of her, she is smiling. Laura was a champion of science writing, a strong supporter of NASW's mentoring efforts and was, herself, a mentor to many. She was a kind soul who comforted me last fall when I lost my mother unexpectedly. With all she was going through, she thought of my loss, not her own troubles. She offered advice as I began freelancing full-time and sent me notes of encouragement every time I published a story. She will be missed.—*Kelli Whitlock Burton*

I sometimes described Laura to other writers as one of those editors who edit just the way you like. She somehow realized from the first moment she looked at something I'd written that I like to be told what's wrong with something and then go off and fix it. I never told her that—she just figured it out somehow. But I got to know Laura as much more than an editor. At the dinner for the National Book Awards in New York, you're allowed to invite three people—your agent, your spouse, and your editor. My wife sat on one side and Laura on the other. (My agent was relegated to another table.) And then last December I got to have one last dinner in Boston with Laura and met Howard for the first time, and that's when I realized just how deeply my friendship

with Laura ran. I'd shared some of the most important years of my life with her, years that would have been much different if I'd never met her. It's amazing to me to realize that she had as powerful an effect on so many people as she had on me.—*Steve Olson*

I've known Laura since *Technology Review* days. When we met at AAAS, she was—incredibly to me—interested in an idea of mine. As we worked on features, I saw an active, even aggressive, editor. But she did not meddle for the sake of it: Her torrent of queries, comments, and suggestions were rooted in an impressive view of the big picture. She exemplified the old *Tech Review*: Science and technology do matter in the world. We remained friends as Laura moved to Houghton Mifflin, and she became a colleague of my mother, Frances, an acquisition editor at Houghton. Mom, of course, was soon calling Laura friend. We watched, awed, at Laura's energy, skill and caring. Finally, we watched her courage in the face of this miserable cancer. She set such a high standard for our craft. More important, she set a high standard for being human.—*David Tenenbaum*

I had gotten used to seeing her at the AAAS annual meeting and at various other gatherings over the past several years, and I always looked forward to it because she was so engaging and friendly. I felt as though we had known each other for a long time. I feel particularly bad now because I had no idea she was even ill. This is a big loss to our community, because although she can be succeeded, she cannot be replaced. *Vaya con Dios*, Laura.—*Phil Berardelli* ■

KNIGHT SCIENCE JOURNALISM TRACKER

by Boyce Rensberger

Science journalists now have an easy way to see what their peers around the country are writing. It's the Knight Science Journalism Tracker, a blog on which veteran science reporter Charlie Petit posts his comments on several of the more prominent stories on science, health, or the environment appearing in the nation's newspapers and wire services.

Every morning Petit surveys Web sites across the country, looking for stories that he thinks science writers, medical writers, and environment writers everywhere ought to know about. He posts links to them, along with his comments on the work. Registered visitors may offer their own comments on each story as well.

"In my posts I try to balance a straight summary of what the story or stories with, say, some kind of comment," Petit says. "At times, no comment occurs to me.

Other times I need to restrain myself. The idea is to have a taste of personal observation in many of the posts, but not to throw users off whatever spontaneous reactions they have and that they might want to send in as comments."

Petit, a past president of NASW, is now a half-time employee of the Knight Science Journalism Fellowships at MIT.

While science reporters have long had opportunities to mix socially, they seldom get a chance to see what their counterparts are doing day in and day out in other cities. Therefore, the site's home page carries the subtitle "Peer review *within* science journalism." If your story gets picked, you can see what comments Charlie and others may have about your work and, of course, you'll have a chance to respond.

Charlie and I believe that if science reporters and editors have convenient and timely access to the work of peers across the country, they can better evaluate and improve their own performance.

The site's discussion boards are open only to those who have applied and been registered as working journalists, public relations officers of scientific institutions, journalism students, or journalism faculty members. It'll be a cumbersome step at first, but it will ensure that the discussion is of, by, and for science journalists. All comments must carry the person's real name.

Petit says finding the stories is made relatively easy by using the RSS service, which most newspapers now provide. These can be tailored to feed all science, medical, or environment stories to Petit's Web browser.

"I've cobbled together dozens of RSS news feeds from daily papers and wire services, plus bookmarks to the relatively few dailies that don't have feeds. I just sit down and go through them, scanning headlines," Petit says. "I know I miss a few, and that's why I hope users will alert us to good stories that ought to be posted."

The URL is KSJTracker.mit.edu. ■

The KSJ Tracker is the brainchild of Boyce Rensberger, director of the Knight Science Journalism Fellowships at MIT.

JOHN WILKES LEAVES HIS MARK ON SCIENCE WRITING

by Esther Landhuis

Famous for sand and surf, Santa Cruz means even more to a rare breed of writers who make their living popularizing science. Many in this specialized field know the quirky town as home to the world's best training ground

Esther Landhuis is a correspondent for the Santa Cruz Sentinel.

for folks looking to join their ranks.

Guiding this enterprise—a yearlong boot camp operated out of several offices and classrooms in Kerr Hall at UC Santa Cruz—John Wilkes. A maverick with wry charm and uncompromising standards, Wilkes has toiled tirelessly for a quarter century crafting a program that has catapulted 250 or so graduates into science-writing jobs at newspapers, magazines, university press offices, aquariums, museums, and other venues around the globe.

"Other programs turn out great people, too, but none can match John Wilkes' record of consistently turning out top-quality science writers," said Peter Aldhous, who has hired about a dozen UCSC science-writing graduates as interns or staff members over the past decade at *Nature* and *New Scientist* magazines. "It's a testament to his vision for the program and his ability to spot nascent talent."

A maverick with wry charm and uncompromising standards...

This month, Wilkes retires as founder and director of the UCSC science communication program, handing the reins to a former pupil, Robert Irion.

Although Wilkes has fine-tuned the program's structure and curriculum over the years, he has never strayed from his fundamental approach: Find closet scribes among fine science students, and give them real-world opportunities to explain science to lay readers.

Among science-writing programs in the world, UCSC's is unique in requiring its students to have substantial prior science training. Each year, 50 to 60 apply for 10 spots, and most have doctorates from top research institutions.

The program is peculiar in another regard: Wilkes was hired in 1981 as its director with no formal background in science or journalism.

Born in 1941 the oldest son of a Navy family, Wilkes spent his early childhood moving up and down the Pacific Coast, arriving in Santa Cruz at age 11. He attended Branciforte Junior High and learned to golf as a caddy at Pasatiempo.

The 1955 San Lorenzo River flooding ruined his dad's downtown auto parts store and sent the family packing. They resettled in Walnut Creek, where Wilkes earned pocket money pumping gas, golfed on his high school team, got interested in girls, and quit high school.

He joined the Air Force at 17, hoping to "sort things out." Ironically, that four-year stint—which sent trainees to Indiana University to learn Russian so they could intercept Soviet military communications in Berlin

—spurred Wilkes' long-term return to the classroom.

Immersed in textbooks 40 hours a week, he rediscovered an old passion.

"I loved to read," Wilkes said, "and I longed to talk with others about what I was reading."

Hard pressed to find fellow bookworms among his gas station co-workers, he headed back to school in 1963 after his discharge, enrolling at San Francisco City College while working as a supermarket checker.

Wilkes transferred as a junior to UCSC in 1965, the year it opened, graduated with honors in literature, and enrolled in the department's doctoral program three years later. After a failed marriage to a fellow graduate student, he put his dissertation aside and spent a year trekking through Europe in an old VW van he'd refashioned as a camper.

Overseas he met his second wife and moved with her back to Saratoga, where she lived. The thesis took a back seat once again as Wilkes plunged into freelance nonfiction writing. He published a book in 1973 about touring Europe in a used VW and wrote a *Road and Track* magazine story about his attempt to build a car using parts from four inoperative 1960 Fiat Bianchinas.

"It was a huge turning point in my life," Wilkes recalled on a recent Friday in his Kerr Hall office, where a poster of a red 1952 Plymouth station wagon adorns the bare wall behind his desk and Jenga-like stacks of periodicals embellish nearby tables. "To be able to walk into a supermarket and see on the shelves the magazine containing my article—that was the biggest thing that ever happened to me."

Still giddy from stardom, Wilkes finished his doctorate in 1973. For the next few years, he stayed at UCSC teaching classes in composition, fiction-writing, and English romanticism. And despite what he'd heard from literature colleagues, Wilkes saw that some of the best science students in his classes could write remarkably well.

Meanwhile, the natural sciences department was looking for someone to fill in for a retired newspaper editor who was brought to UCSC in 1976 to teach a two-quarter science-writing course but departed midway through the sequence. Wilkes seized the opportunity.

"It was the most fun I'd ever had teaching," said Wilkes, a witty, attentive man who wears button-down shirts and khakis most days. "I thought, 'Boy, these students are so good. They should be doing this for others.'"

His star pupils got to do just that. Wilkes arranged paid summer internships for them at the California Assembly Office of Research, in Sacramento, where they wrote white papers advising state legislators on subjects such as solar energy and aquaculture. Wilkes' students came through so well that the assembly passed a resolution in 1979 honoring the UCSC interns.

These early successes were critical in guiding the design of the science communication program Wilkes

would launch several years later.

"SciCommies" enroll in one of two tracks: writing or illustration. They learn not from UCSC faculty but from practicing professionals who carve time out of their hectic work weeks to teach weekly seminars and edit student pieces for slim pay.

"He understands that journalism is more a craft than a scholarship. You learn it by doing it," said Paul Rogers, a *San Jose Mercury News* environment reporter who has taught five classes of SciCommies.

During the school year, the writers also work two days a week at local newspapers, university press offices, or science news Web sites. As 2005 graduate Hannah Hickey puts it, interning her first quarter at the *Monterey County Herald* was like "plunging into the world of journalism headfirst, gasping for air."

Yet the published "clips" produced at these part-time gigs give SciCommies a strong edge landing internships and jobs in the field after graduation.

The venues that host interns also gain, noted Royal Calkins, opinion page editor at the *Herald*. The program "provides some tremendously intelligent and ambitious young writers who add a huge new dimension to the newspaper's reportage, particularly in the areas of science and the environment," he said. "And they are such quick learners that many are able to tackle a wide range of subjects within weeks of their arrivals."

The *Herald* now takes several UCSC interns each quarter, as do the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* and *Salinas Californian*. But Wilkes fought hard for these arrangements, as newspapers typically balk at interns with no prior experience in the trade. It took 15 years of Wilkes' lobbying for the *Herald* to allow a SciCommie through the door.

"What kept me going is the delightful energy and talent of the students, seeing them go out into the world and do their jobs," Wilkes said.

Wilkes has made so many connections in the science-writing world that hundreds of job ads flood his inbox each year, seeking his graduates for full-time and freelance positions nationwide.

These deep networks were one of many reasons the university had a hard time finding someone to fill Wilkes' shoes.

"If we had looked back decades ago when we hired John, it was not obvious that he would be so successful," said George Blumenthal, a UCSC professor of astronomy and astrophysics who was part of the search committee that named Wilkes' successor. "He was hardly a great expert in science writing. Yet he's created this unbelievably fantastic program." ■

"UCSC Professor Turns Out Top-Notch Science Journalists Through Unique Program," *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, June 11, 2006. © 2006 Santa Cruz Sentinel.

LOOKING BACK: THE FIRST U.S. HEART TRANSPLANT

[Editor's Note: Thirty-eight years ago, Stanford University Medical Center became the focus of world attention after Norman Shumway, M.D., performed the first adult human heart transplant in the United States. Spyros Andreopoulos, director emeritus of the medical school's Office of Communication & Public Affairs, offers his reminiscences of the historic event. This updated account is based on a 1988 article he wrote for Campus Report.]

by Spyros Andreopoulos

For two weeks, between Jan. 6 and 22, 1968, my staff and I spent virtually our entire existence as the conduits between the first adult heart transplant in the United States and the world.

The long vigil began on Saturday afternoon when Jane Duff, then assistant director of the medical center news bureau, received a call at home that preparations for a heart transplant were in progress. I was on vacation; she was in charge.

Fifteen minutes later, Jane was at Stanford Hospital while her husband manned the phones of the news bureau, calling my home every two minutes. Earlier in the week I had talked to Dr. Norman Shumway who said no transplant was being planned. While I was 60 miles away enjoying the fresh air, beauty, and solitude of Point Reyes National Seashore, the unexpected happened: A heart donor had become available at Stanford Hospital and the surgeons prepared for the historic operation.

Quickly, Jane alerted the staff. Two classrooms adjacent to the news bureau were converted into a press-room, and additional help was assembled, Bob Beyers, director of the University News Service; Harry Press, and photographers Jose Mercado and Chuck Painter. And I, just a hectic few days after dealing with the press in announcing the synthesis of biologically active DNA by Nobel laureate Arthur Kornberg and his associates, found my brief vacation at a sudden end.

We had established a plan of action a few months earlier when it became apparent that Dr. Shumway, after years of research in dogs, was ready to go ahead with the first human trial. Our purpose was to assist the news media—both print and electronic—in getting prompt and accurate accounts to the public, to protect the patient and his relatives from unnecessary intrusions on their privacy, to make certain that the presence of the press did not disrupt normal hospital functions, and to educate the public about contributions it could make in terms of donating organs for transplants.

When Dr. Christiaan Barnard had performed the

first human heart transplant in South Africa a month earlier, Dr. Shumway, I recall, had sighed with relief. He was aware of the press accounts of “the circus atmosphere with Marx Brothers overtones” that had accompanied the South African event, and he naturally wanted to avoid it. He said to me, “We don’t need to worry about the press now. We can proceed quietly and say nothing until we report our first 10 cases in the surgical journals.”

Yet, when the transplant was done on Jan. 6, 1968, the tip actually came from a reporter from the *San Jose Mercury* who was at a wedding reception also attended by members of the transplant team. He determined that a hospital emergency call received at the reception pre-saged the surgery that followed.

By the time I arrived at Stanford that night, the operation was in progress. About 50 reporters had gathered outside the news bureau and a brief statement about the heart transplant was issued immediately. A bulletin on the patient’s condition was given the next morning. That afternoon, Dr. Shumway and cardiologist Donald C. Harrison talked to reporters.

At the press conference, Dr. Shumway was careful not to raise false hopes. He emphasized that too little was known about heart transplants in humans to promise an appreciable extension on the patient’s life. There were still unresolved problems of immunologic rejection. He continued, “We have reached first base perhaps, but the work is just beginning.”

***By the third day there were
more than 150 reporters
from all over the world
covering the event.***

While professional ethics prevented him from discussing details, Dr. Shumway extended his remarks to an aspect of transplantation he felt was of public interest. Heart transplants had necessitated a complete review of the medical, technical, social, and legal problems and opportunities that face the nation. He said the medical profession needed guidelines from society to operate in this promising, yet exceedingly delicate, area of surgical practice. One of these was the concept of “brain death.” A clear definition was essential for the procurement of donor hearts.

This was Dr. Shumway’s only scheduled appearance with the exception of a brief statement he made several days later after the heart transplant patient died. He declined numerous requests for special interviews and invitations to appear on “Face the Nation,” “Meet the Press,” and the “Today Show.” A hallmark of Shumway has been his avoidance of publicity, both of the personal kind that had raised some flack for other heart surgeons,

and of the general kind that, in Dr. Shumway's view, tended to raise public hopes too early. It was also an attitude that was later to be admired by reporters.

In the ensuing two weeks, we issued at least one news bulletin each day about the patient's condition. Phone calls were coming in continually. Calls were being received from Tokyo, Argentina, London, Paris, and South Africa. One South African reporter tried to reach Dr. Shumway directly by identifying himself as "Dr. Barnard."

One legitimate call from Dr. Barnard actually did come in, and the tables were turned when it was relayed to Dr. Shumway through a reporter—CBS anchorman Walter Cronkite. Barnard had tried to phone Dr. Shumway but couldn't get through. In desperation, Barnard called Cronkite at CBS News, in New York, and asked him if he could relay the message to Shumway concerning immunosuppressants. Cronkite obliged by calling me, and Shumway and Barnard talked.

The news bureau was now open round-the-clock, with all five of us sneaking home whenever possible to grab a few minutes of sleep. Because of the patient's many ups and downs, reporters were afraid they might miss some new development. They camped outside the office during the night, some in sleeping bags, others on the floor. Our workload got heavier and other Stanford news writers were called in—Jeff Littleboy and Bob Lamar—as well as support people to handle the phones. But the bulletins kept rolling-up to four in one day as the patient's condition changed. The phones kept ringing.

By the third day there were more than 150 reporters from all over the world covering the event. I have no problem dealing with reporters on a one-to-one basis, but having to face so many of them before dozens of microphones and TV cameras was an ordeal. Jane Duff and I faced that problem each time we had something legitimate to report.

In back of them were phalanxes of photographers and cameramen with their floodlights. For several minutes, we would read the news bulletins and answer questions—all kinds of questions. "What did we mean by prothrombin time?" "Give us a simple term for platelets." "Explain the function of the spleen." And we would have to repeat the same for those reporters who came late.

One day I had to leave early for another meeting. A crew from an overseas TV service had missed the press conference. The reporter wanted to interview me right away. I said I'd be happy to see him later. The reporter knew that I was Greek by birth and that my mother had called from Athens to say she had watched me on Greek TV. The reporter repeated his plea. When he saw he was not succeeding, he paused, looked at me sadly and said, "Okay, if you don't want to do it for me, do for your mother." I couldn't refuse.

On the serious side, I believe the press generally did a fine job in covering the operation. The reports of our first heart transplant were restrained and accurate. The press was kept abreast of events as they occurred, and it was even possible to satisfy most reporters' individual requests. One correspondent from Los Angeles, then relatively unknown, covering the transplant for NBC News was Tom Brokaw. Because his experience in covering medicine was limited, I would meet with him every morning to explain things. A year later, after the network transferred him to New York, he wrote me a touching letter to thank me for helping to launch his career with NBC.

Locally, the news coverage was limited to the suburban newspapers and the *San Jose Mercury*. By an unhappy coincidence, the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *San Francisco Examiner* were shut down by a printers' strike. *Chronicle* reporter David Perlman, who is widely regarded as the dean of the nation's science writers, did not cover Stanford's first heart transplant for his paper, but for the *Washington Post*. And so it went. Today, with a record of more than 1,000 heart transplants, the largest number in the world and vastly improved survival rates, the program Dr. Shumway started at Stanford remains the undisputed leader in the world. As for us, the first heart transplant highlighted the impossibility of withholding information about a historic operation until the facts of the cases were first reported in the scientific journals. ■

Times were different then

A lot of things have changed on how major medical and scientific advances were reported in those days in which civility counted more than competition and getting a scoop. An example of this was a social evening at my home to which I had invited network TV reporters covering the event to meet Shumway. This was during the long vigil following the transplant in which we were all agonizing about the ups and downs of the first patient. Shumway agreed to come only if reporters promised to talk about things other than transplants. Those present included the late Piers Anderson, of ABC, and Terry Drinkwater, of CBS; Richard Threlkeld, then of CBS; Jack Perkins, of NBC, who was covering the story for the Huntley-Brinkley show; and Tom Brokaw, of NBC, covering for the "Today Show." We had a wonderful evening. We talked about many things—books, literature, current events, but not once did the heart transplant come up.

—Spyros Andreopoulos

CHOOSING A CO-AUTHOR

by Ruth Winter

I read a newspaper story about a program at a local hospital in which a married couple—a psychologist and a physical education teacher—were offering a course for overweight children. It sounded interesting, and I contacted them. We wrote a book together. It was easy until the book was in press and they decided to get a divorce. The cover was already printed but the psychologist-wife insisted that her maiden name be on the byline. The couple became involved in a bitter fight over their son. The psychologist-wife alone, it was decided, was to do the promotion for the book. She did appear on “Donahue,” which back then was almost as good at book selling as “Oprah” is now. But the psychologist did poorly on the program and didn’t raise sales. Nevertheless, the book did pretty well until the publisher went bankrupt.

That was my first co-authoring experience. I’ve co-authored many books since. The following are observations from my experience—not necessarily how you should do it.

First, choose a co-author with the same care as you would choose a mate. In the co-authoring relationship, there are quite often breakups. In fact, several married couples I know who wrote together did divorce after the experience.

You probably have had people tell you “I want to write a book.” Sometimes, they have a very good idea or are a well known scientist. I always say: “Send me *one* paragraph summarizing your idea.” Usually, I don’t hear from them again.

Do you know what “a platform” is? If you don’t, you will when you suggest a co-author to your agent and the agent presents that person’s bio to a publisher. A platform means not only is your co-author an expert with an advanced degree for a medical or science book but is also good on TV, has lecture experience, and brings a following and/or access to a large audience who will buy the book.

For example, my co-author on *The Female Athletes Body Book: Preventing and Treating Sports Injuries in Women and Girls* (McGraw-Hill), Gloria Beim, M.D., is a beautiful young orthopedic surgeon who is an Olympic doctor. She had published many research papers but never a book. Unfortunately, we could not use her Olympic connection—a potentially great selling hook—because the organization does not permit the use of its name for promotion. She has a very

busy practice in Colorado. She became pregnant while we were writing the book, but nevertheless found time to work with me by e-mail and phone. I didn’t meet her in person until after the book was published.

Likewise, my most recent co-author, Elisa Zied, M.S., R.D., is an engaging young spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association with a lot of TV experience and nutrition expertise. Together we wrote *So What Can I Eat: How to Make Sense of the New Dietary Guidelines for Americans and Make Them Your Own*. Wiley wanted the book in one month to coincide with the publication of new USDA Dietary Guidelines. Zied had never written a book before, but she was a trooper. We nearly killed ourselves completing the manuscript, but hesitated turning it in because at deadline we were still without a contract. Things work slowly in publishing and what if the book was turned down and we were left without even the first half of an advance? Ordinarily, an agent would have intervened, but ours was on maternity leave. The editor was frantic to get the book in order to make the forthcoming list. We finally gave in, turned it in, and the book was published. Eventually, we did receive the contract and the full advance.

If you are looking for a Maxwell Perkins who can make a decision on his own, has an instinct for talent, and is willing to work with you to bring out your best as a writer, forget it. Most buying editors today present the proposal to a committee, which includes the head of sales. (It may be different with small presses.) Once signed, the editor has little time to pay attention to the manuscript. Only if you’re lucky will you get a good copy editor. Chances are that the assigning editor, who is supposed to present the finished book to the sales department, may leave before your book is published. My advice: Write as fast as you can.

Once you choose a co-author—but before you approach an agent—have a signed contract with that person. Some writers have very complicated contracts that try to deal with all the things that can go wrong. For example:

- The co-author doesn’t have the information promised.
- The co-author won’t put aside time to work with you.
- The co-author will not respect your writing ability.
- The co-author becomes incapacitated or dead.
- The publisher rejects the manuscript.
- The publisher goes bankrupt.
- The two of you can’t get along.

I have a simple co-author contract (see page 10). Talk to your lawyer or agent about yours.

What about the money?

Most experienced professional writers I know charge a co-author around \$10,000 to write a proposal—often 40 pages—or opt for the full advance. I don’t ask for money upfront. Even after 35 books, I still feel insecure and would have a guilty conscience if the proposal didn’t sell. Instead I ask for 50 percent of the advance

Freelance Ruth Winter lives in Short Hills, NJ and is the author of 35 books on health topics.

and 50 percent of the royalties when the book is sold. So far I've been lucky and all my co-authored proposals have led to sales.

What about bylines?

It can be either "and" or "with" but try to insist that both your names are the same size on the cover.

I've had one really bad experience with a co-author. She was brought to me by a PR agent who then literally went insane. I don't want to get sued, but as a hint, my ex-co-author's mother still calls her "princess." My only consolation was that an ASJA colleague, with whom I commiserated, was writing a book with husband and wife psychiatrists who not only didn't agree

with her—they didn't agree with each other.

Come to think of it, I had another bad experience—there are a lot in publishing. I had read a journal article by a group who treated male sexual difficulties. The group consisted of a urologist, an internist, a marriage counselor, and a psychologist. This was pre-Viagra. The proposal sold and I had been given the entire advance. Before I wrote a word, the group had a fight and they kicked the psychologist out. She insisted that she be included in the book because she had signed the contract. The other three refused. I said I would interview her separately so they wouldn't have to deal with her. They still refused and she threatened to sue.

I consulted my cousin-the-lawyer who gave good advice which I pass along should you run into a similar legal stumbling block. He said "If the book is a hit, she will sue and tie up the royalties for a long time and you'll pay most of the money in lawyer fees. If it doesn't sell well, it's not worth the aggravation."

Viewed in that light, I gave the money back. Needless to say, my agent and the publisher were not happy. Based on that experience, and that of other writer friends, I now make it a rule not to accept more than one co-author on a book. I also let potential co-authors approach me and not go looking for them.

My recent co-authors have been delightful. In fact, one of them I really love—my neurosurgeon husband—with whom I've written three books: *Brain Workout* (originally published as *Build Your Brain Power* by St. Martin's, now an ASJA-iUniverse Book and still selling well), *Smart Food* (originally published by St. Martin's as *Eat Right, Be Bright*), and *Pain In The Neck* (originally published by Grosset, now published by WiseGuide Publishing, and selling modestly). ■

Sample Co-Author Contract

Date: _____

Re: Collaboration Agreement by and between _____ and Ruth Winter, MS

We are seeking to enter into an agreement (the "Agreement") to sell certain print publication rights in and to a full-length book entitled tentatively:

TITLE OF THE BOOK

(hereinafter referred to as "the Work").

The following shall set forth our understanding with respect to our respective rights in the Work and the royalties and other considerations to which we may be entitled pursuant to said Agreement.

1. The copyright in the Work shall be secured and held in the name of both authors for the term of the copyright, and for any additional or new copyright which may hereafter be embodied in any copyright law throughout the world.
2. All monies, advances, proceeds and other considerations which may become payable to us with respect to said Agreement and from the sale, lease, license or other disposition of any and all print publication rights in and to the Work now existing or which may hereafter come into existence shall be apportioned between us as follows:
 - (a) Co-author: 50%
 - (b) Ruth Winter, MS: 50%
3. It is expressly understood that we hereunder do not intend to form nor shall this Agreement be construed to constitute a partnership between us.
4. The terms of this agreement shall be co-extensive with the life of the Work.
5. No mutual expenses for which we are equally responsible shall be incurred without mutual agreement. All such expenses mutually agreed upon shall be shared between us in the same proportions as our respective shares of the gross proceeds provided in paragraph 2 above.
6. The authorship of the Work shall be by _____ and Ruth Winter. We will instruct the publisher that this name is to appear on the jacket and title page of the Work. Co-author's name shall appear first and Winter's name second, but of the same size.
7. Each party hereto warrants and represents to the other that any material written or provided by her in connection with the Work, is not in any way a violation of a copyright, or common law right, or right of privacy, and that it contains nothing of a libelous, obscene, or illegal character, and each party agrees to indemnify and hold the other party harmless against any loss, or damage arising out of a breach of the foregoing representations.
8. The terms and conditions of this letter agreement shall be binding and inure to the benefit of the executors, administrators, and successors of each of us. Our respective signatures herein below shall constitute this to be a complete and binding agreement between us. This agreement may not be assigned by either party without the prior written consent of the other, except that either party may assign his share of the gross proceeds hereunder to a third person, subject to the terms and conditions of this agreement.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED TO:

Co-author

Ruth Winter, MS

FREELANCE HEALTH INSURANCE DEDUCTIONS EXPLAINED

By Julian Block

Medical expenses can add up—and not all of them are covered by your insurance. Indeed, they include your insurance premiums themselves.

Unfortunately, while these outlays may loom large in your eyes, they may not measure up to deduction size in the view of the IRS: As you laboriously list your itemized expenses on Schedule A of Form 1040, you'll find that the only expenditures deemed allowable are those exceeding 7.5 percent of AGI, short for adjusted gross income.

However, freelance writers and other self-employeds do get relief. They are able to deduct 100 percent of their medical insurance premiums (including qualifying long-term care coverage) for themselves and their spouses and dependents *without regard* to that 7.5 percent threshold.

Who qualifies? (1) self-employed individuals, whether they operate their businesses as sole proprietorships, partnerships, or limited liability companies; and (2) S corporation shareholders owning more than two percent of the stock. S corporations are companies that are taxed much the same way as partnerships are and that pass profits through to their shareholders, who pay taxes at their individual rates.

I said that this deduction for medical insurance payments for self-employeds is *not subject* to the 7.5 percent threshold for all other medical expenses. This means that the deduction is not claimed on Schedule A, where expenses are itemized, but on the *front* of Form 1040. The IRS dubs this an "above-the-line adjustment," that is, it's one of the off-the-top subtractions applied in the section where you calculate your AGI. This deduction is thus taken the same way you claim write-offs for, among other things: (1) money stashed in traditional IRAs or other retirement plans; or (2) one-half of the self-employment tax, as calculated on Schedule SE (Self-Employment Tax) of Form 1040.

Not only is this deduction not lumped with those sums to which the 7.5 percent limit is applied. The self-employed medical-insurance deduction is available even to someone who forgoes itemizing for home-mortgage interest, and the like, and instead simply uses the stan-

dard deduction. So even if you choose not to itemize, you still get an up-front deduction for 100 percent of your medical insurance premiums.

If you *do* choose to itemize, don't forget that you've *already* claimed your medical insurance premiums; you can't count that sum again under itemized medical expenses.

There are several other aspects of this up-front deduction that you should bear in mind.

How does that up-front deduction affect your self-employment income for purposes of calculating Social Security taxes? Sorry: It doesn't. The amount you deduct above the line for insurance coverage does *not* reduce self-employment income when filling out Schedule SE to compute net (receipts minus expenses) earnings from self-employment. The computation on that schedule is based strictly on Schedule C, on which you report your self-employment receipts and expenses to arrive at a net profit.

What if you're covered by your spouse's employer's insurance? Then forget about this deduction. This special advantage for medical insurance is reserved just for those who are self-employed. If you're eligible to participate in a health plan maintained by your employer *or your spouse's employer*, those premiums count only as part of regular medical expenses; they do *not* qualify as above-the-line deductions.

What if the premiums were so high, and your income so low, that the insurance cost you more than you made for the year? There's an important limitation: *No* deduction for medical insurance payments that exceed a self-employed individual's net earned income (shown on Schedule C) for the year in question.

Finally: Suppose you spend just part of the year—a month or two, say—on staff with a company or organization? That's going to affect the deductible amount: *No* up-front deduction for medical insurance for any month during the year in question for which you are eligible to be covered by a medical insurance plan provided by an organization that employs you *or your spouse*—and that's true whether the employment is on a full- or part-time basis. ■

SOCIETY FOR NEUROSCIENCE SCIENCE JOURNALISM STUDENT AWARD

The Society for Neuroscience has created a new Science Journalism Student Award. This award is designed to encourage students interested in pursuing a career in science or medical journalism by helping them attend Neuroscience 2006, the society's annual meeting, October 14-18, in Atlanta.

Two separate awards will be granted: one to a student from outside the annual meeting region, and one to a local student. Each award will include a stipend

Julian Block, an attorney in Larchmont, N.Y., has been cited as a "leading tax professional" (New York Times) and an "accomplished writer on taxes" (Wall Street Journal). This article is excerpted from his Tax Tips For Small Businesses: Savvy Ways For Writers, Photographers, Artists And Other Freelancers to Trim Taxes to The Legal Minimum. Contact him at julianblock@yahoo.com. Copyright 2006 Julian Block. All rights reserved.

to cover transportation, registration, hotel, and meals.

This award is open to all undergraduate and graduate journalism students who either are pursuing a formal education program in science or medical journalism. Students pursuing a scientific or medical degree may also apply if they can adequately demonstrate a sincere desire and intention to pursue a career in science or medical journalism.

Deadline for applications is Sept. 1, 2006. More information at www.sfn.org. ■

(Source: news release)

PERLMAN AWARD BESTOWED ON DAN VERGANO

Dan Vergano of *USA Today* is the recipient of this year's David Perlman Award for Excellence in Science Journalism from the American Geophysical Society (AGU) for his article, "The Debate's Over: Globe is Warming," *USA Today's* cover story on June 13, 2005.



PHOTO BY HARVEY LEFERT

In choosing Vergano, the Perlman Award selection committee remarked "Rather than rehashing the debate of the existence of global warming and the accuracy of predictive climate models, his exceptional article... propels us forward through an emerging realization of the global, severe societal impact of global warming to the harsh economic, moral, and technical realities facing industry and

policy makers. Vergano is unusually effective in revealing the linkages between the science of climate change and the complexity of technical and economic decisions facing its mitigation." The winning article is posted at www.usatoday.com/news/world/2005-06-12-global-warming-cover_x.htm.

The Perlman Award, named for David Perlman, science editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, consists of a plaque and a \$2,000 stipend.

AGU is the world's largest organization of Earth and space scientists, with 45,000 members worldwide. One of its goals is to encourage excellence in reporting science news to the general public through journalism awards, mass media fellowships, communications workshops for scientists, and other programs. ■

(Source: News release)

TOM SIEGFRIED WINS AGU'S COWEN AWARD IN SCIENCE JOURNALISM

Tom Siegfried, freelance writer and former science editor of the *Dallas Morning News*, has been named winner of this year's Robert C. Cowen Award for Sustained Achievement in Science Journalism. The award is presented by the American Geophysical Union (AGU) to "an individual who has made significant, consistent, and lasting contributions of high quality in science journalism, particularly in the coverage of subjects related to the Earth and space sciences."



PHOTO BY HARVEY LEFERT

In selecting Siegfried, AGU recognized above all his tenure at the *Dallas Morning News* (1985-2004), where he created and nurtured one of the most respected science journalism departments of any U.S. newspaper. He wrote over 900 weekly columns on aspects of science and its role in society, demonstrating a broad knowledge of diverse scientific fields. His column now appears every second week in "The Why Files," an online science publication of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

At the *Dallas Morning News*, Siegfried hired and trained a team of reporters to specialize in specific aspects of science and medicine. He has considered it a duty to encourage and mentor young science writers. He annually hosted a Mass Media Fellow, as well as interns, at the *Morning News*, and some of his "alumni," both staff and fellows, have developed distinguished careers of their own at such publications as *Nature*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. As a member of the board of directors of the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing, Siegfried has helped assure that science journalists stay abreast of new developments and that reporters meet with leading researchers in a variety of fields.

The Robert C. Cowen Award for Sustained Achievement in Science Journalism is named for the distinguished former science editor of the *Christian Science Monitor*. ■

(Source: AGU news release)

STUDENT JOURNALISM ENDOWMENT HONORS EARL UBELL

Coinciding with his 80th birthday, longtime NASW member Earl Ubell has been honored with the creation of the Earl Ubell Student Journalism Project Endowment Fund. Created by his son, Michael C. Ubell, the fund will provide a grant or grants to Hampshire College students seeking support for projects involving journalism, with preference given to projects in health and science journalism. Earl Ubell was the health and science editor for WCBS-TV from 1966 to 1972 and from 1978 to 1995. Michael C. Ubell, a software designer and developer who created the fund to honor his father, is a Hampshire College alum. The college will begin administering the fund in academic year 2007-08.

Born on June 21, 1926 in Brooklyn, NY, Earl Ubell served in the U.S. Navy from 1944 to 1946. Upon his return, he attended the City College of the City University of New York, graduating in 1948. He began his journalism career at the *New York Herald Tribune* as a messenger, and rose to science editor, a position he held from 1953 to 1966, before turning to television. At WCBS-TV he became well-known for the clarity and imagination with which he explained scientific and medical advances, influencing generations of TV journalists and their audiences.

As a newsman Ubell traveled the world, covering such notable events as the first Sputnik flight, in 1961, and the first U.S. manned space flight, in 1962. He, himself, participated in scientific research at the Weizmann Institute, California Institute of Technology, Jackson Laboratory, and elsewhere. He is the author of seven books, co-author of one book, and contributor to more than 50 popular and scientific magazines, and has written more than 2,000 articles to newspapers.

Ubell's awards include the Albert and Mary Lasker Medical Journalism Award (1957), the AAAS-Westinghouse Science Writing Award (1960), the Empire State Award for excellence in medical reporting (1963), Science Writers Award of American Psychological Foundation (1965), New York State Associated Press Broadcasting Award for excellence in reporting (1969 and 1970), Emmy Award (for New York area) (1970), and the Donald Salmon Award for significant contribution to development of the arts (1970).

For more information on the Earl Ubell Student Journalism Project Endowment Fund contact Kelley Tice, Development Officer, Hampshire College, 893 West Street, Amherst, MA 01002; phone 413-559-5635; e-mail ktice@hampshire.edu. ■

(Source: news release)

WHY Y?

by Rick Borchelt

While NASW and AAAS have gone their separate ways for annual meeting activities, there are still some pretty strong ties that bind the organizations. One of them is that NASW remains an affiliated society of AAAS; another is that many NASW members are active in the sections that comprise the working body of AAAS.

These sections represent various disciplines of science, and run from A (Mathematics) through Z (Linguistics and Language Sciences). Ostensibly, these sections are the grassroots membership that runs the AAAS, and in truth, the sections have raised a number of issues near and dear to NASW hearts over the past couple of years that have then been addressed by AAAS management.

**...your [AAAS] section
affiliation does matter.**

Many NASW members who subscribe to *Science* never have to choose a section with which to affiliate—you can just leave this field blank when you sign up and never give it another thought. Or you might choose to affiliate with the section that comes closest to the fields you write about. If you're a member of NASW who also is a member of AAAS or a personal subscriber to *Science*, here's a pitch for making a conscious effort to pick a section for affiliation, and a subtle hint about which section you might pick.

When you join AAAS/subscribe to *Science*, you're asked to select up to three sections for affiliation—primary, secondary, and tertiary. AAAS doles out programming funds from its operational budget to the sections based on the size of the membership who select that section as a primary affiliation. The largest sections get the most money to sponsor AAAS sessions, fund speaker travel, and conduct other meeting-related activities. So, your section affiliation actually *does* matter. Only the primary affiliation counts for the purposes of AAAS funding.

Historically, Section Y—General Interest in Science and Engineering—has had the greatest overlap with NASW membership, and has been the traditional home of science communicators, journalists, journalism instructors, and museum staff. It's also the home of

Rick Borchelt is communications director of the Genetics and Public Policy Center, at Johns Hopkins University, and immediate past president of AAAS Section Y.

most of the officers of the academies of science in various states, because they, too, have an interest in public understanding of science. NASW members have often chaired this section—Carol Rogers is the current chair, I just stepped down from my stint of chairmanship, and JoAnn Valenti has served as the section secretary since the fall of Rome. Section Y also does a large share of the programming at the AAAS annual meeting that is most relevant to NASW concerns—we've sponsored or co-sponsored programs at the annual meeting on risk communication, the scientist-reporter relationship, nanotechnology, science literacy, global climate change, and a host of other issues. The section also routinely recommends journalists and academicians to round out the sessions proposed by other sections. So for a lot of reasons, for an NASW member seeking a box to check for primary affiliation, "Y" would be a good box to check.

There are other worthy sections, too, that could lay claim to the hearts of NASW members. Section X covers Societal Impacts of Science and Engineering, and Section K members are most interested in Social, Economic, and Political Science. Section L is History and Philosophy of Science. So while I'm partial to Section Y (and we need the money!), in the spirit of "Rock the Vote," we'd be happy if you just picked a section—it makes more AAAS money available for programming and events at the annual meeting. But Carol, JoAnn, and I would be happiest if you picked Section Y! ■



SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION ARCHIVES

Editor's note: Regretted not having sufficient space in the spring issue ("Remembering Pioneering Women Science Writers") to run this photo of Emma Reh Stevenson, who wrote for *Science Service* in the mid-1920s. She's seen here on a trusty steed, in Mexico, where she was a science correspondent.

Katrina coverage earns Times-Picayune additional laurels

The Times-Picayune, of New Orleans, continues to receive awards for its coverage of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. The latest: The Pulitzer Prize and a special journalism award, from the American Geophysical Union.

The newspaper won Pulitzers for public-service journalism and also the breaking-news prize for its Katrina coverage. Among the reporting team sharing this honor is **NASW member John Pope**.

The Pulitzer committee cited *The Times-Picayune* for making "exceptional use of the newspaper's resources to serve an inundated city even after evacuation of the newspaper plant." For the first time, applicants in all categories were allowed to include materials published online as part of their entries. *The Times-Picayune*, which evacuated much

of its staff as water from a levee breach rose around the plant, published the paper only online for several days following the hurricane.

The newspaper also receive a special award from AGU for its consistently excellent coverage of scientific research demonstrating the vulnerability of New Orleans to hurricanes and other environmental impacts in the years prior to Hurricane Katrina. In conveying this special award, AGU praised the newspaper's diligent efforts to inform its readership about such matters as wetland preservation, land subsidence, levee reinforcement, storm surge, and hurricane prediction. For example, in June 2002, the paper introduced a five-part series, "Washing Away," with a banner warning: "It's only a matter of time before southern Louisiana takes a direct hit from a major hurricane. Billions have been spent to protect us, but we grow more vulnerable every day."

(Source: news releases)

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

by Robert Lee Hotz

Huddled in a wind-buffed tent on the Greenland ice cap not so many weeks ago, I found myself thinking about NASW and the journeys we undertake in pursuit of our craft of science writing.

Like many reporters, I had come to Greenland to better understand the nuances of global warming and climate change. As I talked to scientists studying how changes in this immense ice cap—big enough to layer the entire United States a thousand feet deep in a smothering sheath of ice—could alter our future, I began to contemplate our own recent past and what might lie ahead for NASW.

My thoughts turned to the death this spring of Laura van Dam, whose gallant battle against cancer during her time as NASW president was both inspiring and ultimately so tragic. We mourn her passing. Her contributions to NASW, she strongly believed, were an important legacy. Despite the trials of her illness, Laura helped us navigate a crucial crossroads in the 72-year journey of this organization.

Consider a few of the milestones of the past 18 months:

For the first time, we stepped out on our own as a truly independent organization of science writers. This was the culmination of a process that began under the leadership of past presidents Richard Harris, Joe Palca, Paul Raeburn, and Deborah Blum. Our two—yes two— independent Science-in-Society meetings in Washington and Pittsburgh during 2005 were by every measure an unqualified success. Our association with the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing is adding welcome technical depth to our annual meetings. Under the leadership of workshop organizer Tinsley Davis, the 2006 meeting in Baltimore is shaping up to be an even more polished, exciting event. Executive director Diane McGurgan, as always, continues to make everything work smoothly even as our professional affairs have grown so much more complex.

There is more. Under the leadership of cybrarian Russ Clemmings, our Web site this past year was completely rebuilt, creating a solid technical foundation on which we can make the NASW web even more the vital virtual heart of our national community. NASW treasurer Mariette DiChristina and board member Kelli Whitlock Burton guided the redesign effort with



PHOTO COURTESY OF SIGMA XI

admirable dispatch and aplomb.

At the same time, board member Robin Marantz Henig and freelance committee chair Dan Ferber organized the NASW grievance committee to aid writers in serious contract disputes. And on another front, the education committee is working to expand the NASW mentoring program at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science into a broad effort to foster the next generation of science writers. Now that we have a healthy distance, we look forward to developing ways for NASW and AAAS to advance our shared educational goals.

...we have become perhaps the largest journalism organization in the United States, with more than 2,500 dues-paying members.

Taken together, such efforts represent a coming of age for the National Association of Science Writers. By raw count, we have become perhaps the largest journalism organization in the United States, with more than 2,500 dues-paying members. Times now are turbulent for our craft. In the years ahead, it will be our task to build on this splendid volunteer foundation, to discover effective ways to nurture our craft, protect its interests, and advance its goals.

As I kept being told by climate researchers in Greenland, the only certain thing we can expect in this world is change. ■

NASW BOARD ELECTION CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Election of the 2007-08 NASW board takes place this year with ballots mailed to all members in late October. In addition to four officers, the board consists of 11 members at large. The nominating committee of Deborah Blum (chair), Paul Raeburn, and the late Laura van Dam have assembled an outstanding slate of candidates.

Officer Candidates:

Robert Lee Hotz—*President (Los Angeles Times)*

As president, I will continue to seek ways for NASW to bolster its independence. I will work to broaden member services and sustain our excellent professional development programs. Furthermore, I hope to strengthen our Internet operation, which knits together our members in a virtual community.

Robert Lee Hotz is a science writer for the Los Angeles Times. He can be reached at leehotz@earthlink.net.

2006 NASW BUDGET REPORT

Income	2005 Proposed	2005 Actual	2006 Proposed
Dues	\$ 170,000	\$ 176,353	\$ 175,000
Labels	18,000	16,579	16,000
Ads/Online & Newsletter	12,000	15,817	12,000
Unrealized Gain	2,200	1,908	1,900
Misc. Income	250	2,065	2,000
Bank Interest	596	625	700
Subtotal	\$ 203,046	\$ 213,347	\$ 210,600

Special Sources

Dividends /Investments	\$ 526	\$ 1,815	\$ 1,800
CD Interest	1,300	2,333	2,300
CASW Grant	3,000	3,000	1,500
Comm. Sci. News booklet	0	38	0
NASW Banque	13,014	15,817	14,000
Book Party Pittsburgh	10,000	5,000	0
SW Field Guide	5,000	7,599	5,500
Workshops	51,440	67,395	55,000
Workshops in Pittsburgh	25,000	33,519	0
Authors Coalition	52,000	142,000	55,000
Subtotal	\$ 161,280	\$ 278,516	\$ 135,10

TOTAL INCOME	\$ 364,326	\$ 491,863	\$ 345,700
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Expenses

Exec. Dir. Payroll	\$ 42,000	42,000	42,000
Taxes & Benefits	12,000	12,821	13,000
Exec. Dir. T&E	2,500	1,668	1,500
Newsletter Production	40,000	45,677	47,000
Editor	20,000	20,000	22,000
Awards	15,000	16,372	16,000
Roster	12,000	12,495	13,100
Office Expenses Misc.	1,000	794	1,000
Accountant Fee	5,000	5,000	5,500
Postage	5,300	5,246	5,000
Supplies	1,000	2,316	2,000
Telephone	2,400	3,567	3,000
Printing	4,200	4,925	5,000
Depreciation	0	0	0
Corporate Taxes	400	250	250
Authors Coalition	42,000	37,523	45,000
Bank Charges	4,000	2,207	2,300
Check and Payroll Services	500	736	780
Computer Support	500	546	500
Subtotal	\$ 209,800	\$ 214,143	\$ 227,950

Special Projects

Local Groups	\$ 1,000	\$ 350	\$ 1,000
Cybrarian	16,000	16,600	25,000
Web Hosting	1,500	1,500	1,500
Website Redesign	10,000	9,500	5,000
Bd. Travel (DC & Pitt)	22,500	16,169	10,000
SW Field Guide	3,000	2,378	1,000
Workshop Symposia	55,258	54,744	50,000
Workshops in Pittsburgh	25,000	17,907	0
Banquet Outlays	17,788	17,907	8,000
Banquet in Pittsburgh	10,000	17,615	0
Diane McGurgan Award	850	814	825
Ins. (Bd. Liability /Work. Comp.)	3,350	3,082	3,100
Dues-WFSJ	300	300	300
Subtotal	\$ 166,546	\$ 146,459	\$ 105,725
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 376,346	\$ 360,602	\$ 333,655

As for my background, I am a science writer for the *Los Angeles Times* and shared a 1995 Pulitzer Prize with my *Times* colleagues for coverage of the Northridge Earthquake and was a Pulitzer Prize finalist in 1987 and 2004. I have three times won the AAAS Science Journalism Award, as well as the Walter Sullivan Award from the American Geophysical Union.

I split my year between New York and Los Angeles. I am married with two sons. We all like to scuba dive.

Mariette DiChristina—Vice President
(*Scientific American*)

During the past two years as an NASW officer, I have been fortunate to serve alongside terrific colleagues working to improve the organization. I will continue to energetically pursue benefits for members as vice president.

As Internet committee co-chair since 2005, I helped oversee NASW's Web site redesign, from hiring the designer to proofreading pages. In 2005, as secretary, I initiated the electronic newsletters, to provide regular updates about board activities. In 2006, I am treasurer.

From 1997 to 2005, I co-chaired NASW's education committee and its mentoring program, matching more than 250 aspiring science writers with mentors. I helped develop several education committee projects, including Web site informational resources for beginning science writers (in 2001) and for science educators (in 2004), as well as the internship fair at the AAAS annual meeting. For these efforts, I was co-winner of the 2004 Diane McGurgan Service Award. From May 2001 through May 2004, I chaired Science Writers in New York. Currently the executive editor at *Scientific American*, I have been a journalist for about 20 years.

Nancy Shute—Treasurer (*U.S. News & World Report*)

In the past two years, I've been part of the group that has helped NASW develop a stronger, more independent annual meeting, and worked to resolve our dif-

BUDGET SUMMARY

Bank Report	12/31/2004	12/31/2005
Savings	\$ 1,411	\$ -0-*
Money Market Account	39,823	35,463
CDs	113,578	147,698
Mutual Funds	61,035	65,778
Cash	4,800	22,506
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 220,647	\$ 271,445
*account closed		
2005 Total Income		\$ 491,863
2005 Total Expenses		\$ 360,602
2005 Net (Gain)		\$ 131,261
2006 Proposed Income		\$ 345,700
2006 Proposed Expenses		\$ 333,655
2006 Net (Gain)		\$ 12,045

facilities with member access to the AAAS meeting. NASW's diverse membership is a great strength, and I'm also working on expanding our outreach to minority communities.

I'm a senior writer at *U.S. News & World Report*, covering science and medicine. But I've been through many mutations as a journalist—from a small-town newspaper and television reporter in Idaho, on to covering Congress and the Supreme Court, then freelancing for magazines including *Outside*, *Health*, and *Smithsonian*. In the early 1990s, I founded the first bilingual newspaper in Kamchatka, Russia, on a Fulbright. Through it all, NASW has been an invaluable source of practical advice, professional insight, and camaraderie.

I'd like to continue to help NASW develop programs that will be useful and interesting to members, while defending the organization's independence and financial integrity.

Peggy Girshman—*Secretary* (National Public Radio)

As the assistant managing editor of NPR News, I oversee (among other tasks) the science desk and "Talk of the Nation." I have 30 years' experience as a broadcast journalist, specializing in science with stints as medical/science producer for the CBS-TV affiliate in Washington, D.C., a producer for "Innovation," and a senior producer for "Against All Odds: Inside Statistics," "Scientific American Frontiers," and "Discover: The World of Science," all PBS science programs. In the late 90s, I was senior medical producer for "Dateline NBC."

I was an MBL fellow in 1987 and a Knight Fellow at MIT in 1991. I previously served one term on the NASW board several years ago and am currently on the NASW membership committee. I have judged the Ev Clark, AAAS, Keck Communication, and NASW Science-in-Society awards.

As part of my job at NPR, I am the main contact for freelance reporters; so I am particularly interested in freelance issues, especially in the intriguing question: How does one keep reporting and being a journalist while still making a living?

Board nominees (11 seats available):

Beryl Lieff Benderly (Freelance)

In 2002, through my efforts, NASW joined Authors Coalition of America, which has been a reliable source of income exceeding \$50,000 annually. These funds provide travel grants, informational content for our publications and Web site, and other projects that benefit science writers. As NASW's liaison to the coalition, I keep NASW abreast of crucial developments by "attending" monthly telephone meetings and serving on the coalition's distribution committee. Within

NASW, I serve on the freelance committee, which I formerly chaired, and have also co-chaired the Science-in-Society Award committee that originated the book prize. NASW has honored my service with the Diane McGurgan Award.

In recent years, the environment for science writing has grown increasingly difficult, both economically and in terms of finding information. In these challenging times, I believe, science writers need NASW to be their ever more vigorous source of information, education, advocacy, and support. A freelance with five national writing prizes, eight books, hundreds of articles, and a monthly column on *Science* magazine's Web site, I hope to continue working to make NASW stronger and more useful to all our members.

Glennnda Chui (*San Jose Mercury News*)

After 20 years as a science reporter for the *San Jose Mercury News*, I recently became editor of the paper's science-health-environment team. I also co-teach the science newswriting course in the UC-Santa Cruz science communication program. I've been a member of the Northern California Science Writers Association pretty much since it started, and have served on its board and as president. With Tom Paulson, I co-chair the NASW freedom of information committee, which keeps tabs on situations that threaten to restrict access to information that is critical to doing our jobs. The committee works closely with the Society of Health Care Journalists, the Association of Health Care Journalists, and a national FOI coalition recently set up under the auspices of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press.

Terry Devitt (University of Wisconsin-Madison/
"The Why Files")

If elected to the board, I will work to ensure the broad representation of our membership and that NASW retain its inclusive character. I am especially concerned about education and that NASW maintain and expand programs to help equip future science writers. Those programs are among our most critical as they provide a gateway to the business and to NASW. I hope, too, to contribute to the continued viability of our programs of professional development and finding ways to help the organization manage change.

I have been an NASW member since 1986 and serve on the education committee. I organized the NASW internship fair for three years, a position from which I am now retired. My day job is director of research communications for the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where I have worked for more than two decades. My night job is as editor of "The Why Files," a popular online science magazine that I helped found 10 years

ago. As I have college-age and near-college-age children, I also work as a freelance science writer.

Dan Ferber (Freelance)

In our rapidly changing business, NASW needs to keep coming up with creative strategies to help science writers and science writing thrive. If elected to the board, I'll focus on helping NASW enhance member services and promote science journalism.

As chair or co-chair of the freelance committee since 2004, I've helped oversee several initiatives, including fact sheets on contracts and a slate of panels at NASW's annual conference on topics of interest to freelancers. As chair of NASW's new grievance committee, I help members collect overdue fees and resolve other grievances with publishers. I have also served in NASW's mentoring program each of the past six years.

I'm a freelance journalist, a contributing correspondent for *Science*, and a contributor to *Popular Science*, *Audubon*, *Reader's Digest*, and many other magazines. I won an outstanding article award in 2004 from the American Society of Journalists and Authors, and a feature of mine will be included in the anthology *Best of Technology Writing 2006*.

Bob Finn (International Medical News Group)

I've had the privilege of being a part of NASW's transition to a more active professional association, first as an enthusiastic member, then as NASW's cybrarian, and finally as a member of the board. During my board service I've concentrated on NASW's Science-in-Society Awards. As co-chair of the award committee, I've worked to increase the prestige of the only award given by science writers to science writers. I've worked especially hard this year to assemble a stellar list of judges, and we've decided to announce not only winners but also honorable mentions in each of the five categories. I hope to continue this effort in another board term. I hope to establish an annual Science-in-Society Lecture to be given by a prominent scientist, writer, or public figure, and I hope to increase the dollar amount of the awards. NASW is unusual among writers' organizations in including freelancers, staff journalists, and public information officers among its members. Since I've worked in all three of these areas, I believe that I have a unique ability to represent all of NASW's constituencies.

Tony Fitzpatrick (Washington University in St. Louis)

I am seeking board membership in NASW to maintain and enhance the relationship among the various NASW writers and communicators. I consider the way that we function together to be our organization's hallmark. University science writers are the envy of univer-

sity colleagues who cover other disciplines because of NASW, which provides an egalitarian fellowship and a host of services that simply does not exist for other writers.

I made the switch from teacher to science communicator when Rod Stewart went disco on us in 1978. Since 1980, I've worked for two major research universities, the University of Illinois and Washington University in St. Louis, but I also have freelanced, and authored a book cited by *Library Journal* as one of the best science and technology books for lay readers published in 1993. I have worked for science institutions, and have been a member of NASW for nearly 19 years.

At Washington University, I'm proudest of my role in fostering young science writers and in bringing the CASW New Horizons in Science Briefing to my campus in 1993 and 2002.

Jon Franklin (University of Maryland)

I am a long-time science writer known for my innovative stories about research and the culture of science. My credits include five books, the Grady medal, inaugural Pulitzers in the feature writing and explanatory journalism categories, and a special Penney-Missouri award. I am a veteran of 22 years' science reporting for newspapers and magazines; my academic career includes the leadership of a science writing department and a creative writing program. The founder and moderator of WriterL, I am currently the Philip Merrill professor of journalism at the University of Maryland. I have served three terms on the board. My most recent contributions include efforts to explore and capitalize on new-technology publishing opportunities for members (such as print-on-demand) and electronic books.

Denise Graveline (don't get caught—creative communications consulting)

My experience mirrors that of a wide range of NASW members, from journalist, to PIO, to freelancer. I've directed communications and public information for the two largest scientific societies, AAAS and the American Chemical Society, serving science journalists, freelancers, and PIOs and working closely with NASW to meet its needs from within those organizations. I've also served as a senior public affairs official for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, worked as a magazine writer and editor, and freelanced successfully for many years. Currently, I am an independent communications consultant with corporate, federal, nonprofit, and educational institutions among my clients. I'm on the organizing committee for the 2006 NASW workshops and am organizing one session at that meeting, and have served on numerous nonprofit boards. As NASW continues toward increased independence, I will work to strengthen the organization and its member services,

particularly those on the Internet and in professional development.

Robin Marantz Henig (Freelance)

Maybe it's because I'm a full-time freelance that my work on the NASW board for the past eight years has been so satisfying—it's the only way I have colleagues anymore! Last year, I helped create a new grievance committee, in which three of us (Dan Ferber, Ellen Ruppel Shell, and I) deal with members' complaints about publishers or employers. We handled four grievances in our first six months, and our track record is four for four. It's a wonderful new member service for an evolving organization.

I've written eight books, most recently *Pandora's Baby*, about the early days of in vitro fertilization, and *The Monk in the Garden*, about the early days of genetics. I was also a co-editor of NASW's terrific official resource (and cash cow), *A Field Guide to Science Writing*. I spend most of my time these days writing articles for the *New York Times Magazine*, where I'm a contributing writer. One of those articles appeared in *Best American Science Writing 2005*, and another won the 2004 Science-in-Society Award from NASW.

Tom Paulson (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*)

Having served one term on the board for NASW, I've come to better appreciate just how valuable this organization can be—and how much it depends upon the work of a few dedicated individuals. My interest in continued service on the board includes: improving NASW's role in supporting and growing local affiliate groups, offering local assistance for the 2007 NASW/CASW meeting in Spokane, and seeking other organizational strategies aimed at promoting science media (or, at the very least, stopping the current decline).

John Pope (*The Times-Picayune*)

I have been a medical and health reporter for *The Times-Picayune*, in New Orleans, for 20 years. I was a member of the newspaper's team that won 2006 Pulitzer Prizes, for Public Service and Breaking News, for our Hurricane Katrina coverage.

During my career, I've discovered the power of the science writers' network, building bonds through fellowships and relying on each other as sounding boards, colleagues and friends.

That network was never more important than when Katrina hit last year. Evacuating, publishing online-only editions for three days, and serving as an electronic lifeline for the New Orleans diaspora—and those who love the city everywhere—made us all realize how

much we rely on networks, whether they be online as blogs and community bulletin boards, or in person.

I'd like to make our networking more powerful and more interactive, helping our recently redesigned Web site grow into a popular forum where we can readily share ideas, issues, approaches, and information that can be critical in a crisis like Katrina and important every day.

Tabitha M. Powledge (Freelance)

Radical changes in markets for science writers now dominate our work lives. From 1997 to this year, I examined those changes in the *ScienceWriters* column *The Free Lance*. I am also on two committees: freelance and Web. In the six years I have been a board member, NASW has become more activist and concerned about professional issues ranging from electronic rights to freedom of information. We have expanded services for our growing freelance membership, improving reliability of essential electronic communications and helping resolve grievances and payment problems with clients.

I was founding editor of *The Scientist* and an editor at what is now *Nature Biotechnology*. A full-time freelance since 1990, I have written for, among others, *Scientific American*, *Health* magazine, *PLOS Biology*, *The Scientist*, the *Washington Post*, *BioScience*, *Popular Science*, the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, *Current Biology*, *The Lancet*, and Web publications such as Salon.com, HMS Beagle/BioMedNet.com, and *The Scientist*. I am co-author of the forthcoming *Complete Idiot's Guide to Microbiology* and am working on a second edition of my 1994 book *Your Brain: How You Got It and How It Works*.

Susanne Rust (*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*)

For three years, I've been a science reporter for the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*.

A former primate behaviorist, I changed careers in 2001 after taking Deborah Blum's science writing class at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Recognizing the "call," I applied for an AAAS Mass Media Fellowship, got it, and then interned at the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* during the summer of 2002. That fall, I became a UC Santa Cruz science communications student, but was invited to return to the *Journal Sentinel*—at the end of my first quarter—as a permanent member of its newsroom staff.

I'd like to join the NASW board as a neophyte, green-horn-promoting member. Being new to the field is not easy and there are a lot of us newcomers out there who need the support, opportunities, and community NASW offers. As a board member, I'd like reach out to this demographic: Help to strengthen recruitment and get new members actively involved, thereby ensuring a long and strong future for this respected and important organization.

Sally Squires (*Washington Post*)

We stand at a pivotal point in the news business. Shrinking news holes in print journalism, the decline of science and health sections in newspapers, and decreasing viewers on network and local television are offset by growing opportunities on the Web and emerging multimedia, from e-mail newsletters to streaming video and audio, from podcasts to cell phones. It's key that science and medical journalists make this transition to new media to deliver the highest quality coverage possible in this brave new world of journalism.

In 2005, the outreach committee of which I am co-chair organized a workshop at the American Association of Sunday and Feature Editors in Denver—just one way to educate editors about the importance of science and medical reporting. It's an outreach effort that I'd like to continue to shepherd if I have the privilege of serving again as an NASW board member. There are also intriguing possibilities to pursue with the National Association of Broadcasters, the American Society of Newspaper Editors and the J-Lab at the University of Maryland—a pioneer in interactive journalism.

Curt Suplee (National Science Foundation)

As a multi-faceted has-been, I'm probably qualified to represent a broad spectrum of NASW members. I've written four books and dozens of freelance magazine stories, worked as a writer and editor at the *Washington Post* for 25 years, and now run the public-information operation for NSF. I've won writing awards from AAAS, the American Chemical Society, the American Astronomical Society, and so forth. I'm freelancing whenever possible.

On the NASW board, I'm involved in a fledgling outreach campaign to inform news organizations, scientific associations, and citizen groups about the value of science reporting. That project has truly ambitious goals. And it should: Our profession is threatened by shrinking news holes, desperate "dumbing down" to attract younger audiences, and management indifference to what top editors perceive as "difficult" subject matter. NASW must be as active as possible in trying to reverse this dismal trend, and I am proud to be a part of the effort.

Rabiya Tuma (Freelance)

I am a full-time freelance journalist, specializing in oncology, cell biology, and neurobiology. I currently write for a variety of trade and popular publications, including *The Economist*, *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, and *CURE*.

Prior to launching my writing career in 2000, I obtained my doctorate in biochemistry and worked as a research scientist for a number of years. I have learned

journalism on the job, by attending workshops, and by reading the NASW listserves. In the past several years, I have participated in and co-organized NASW workshop panels on how to build and maintain a successful freelance business. This year I became a member of the 2006 workshop committee and co-chair of the freelance committee.

Like many science writers, I rely on NASW for interaction with my geographically-dispersed colleagues and for professional development. If elected to the board, I would work to foster these aspects of our community.

Kelli Whitlock (Freelance)

Like many science writers, I was drawn to the field by a love of writing and a curiosity about science and medicine. Since 1990, I have worked as a newspaper medical reporter and as a PIO and magazine editor and writer for a number of universities. I now am a full-time freelance writer and editor based in Ohio and a regular contributor to a number of publications, including the *Boston Globe* and *ScienceNOW*! I have a bachelor's degree from the University of Alabama and a master's degree from Ohio University, both in journalism, and have taught science writing to undergraduate journalism students. I served as co-chair of the NASW education committee from 1997-2004, during which time I coordinated the annual Mentoring at AAAS program and helped launch the annual internship fair and two Web sites targeted at new science writers and science-writing teachers. My co-chair, Mariette DiChristina, and I were honored for this work with the Diane McGurgan Service Award in 2004. During my first term as an at-large board member, I served as co-chair of the Internet committee, which was charged with the task of creating the new NASW Web site, which launched earlier this year.

The field of science writing has changed tremendously since I joined NASW in 1995, and this is an especially exciting time for our organization. Working with many dedicated volunteers, the board is eager to expand our efforts in the areas of science writing education and mentorship, professional development and advocacy for our members, and public outreach. There are many ways to pursue these interests, and I'd welcome the opportunity to be a part of these activities during a second term on the board. ■

Board Candidates by Petition

There's still time to become a candidate for the board by submitting a petition endorsed by 20 NASW members to NASW, P.O. Box 890, Hedgesville, WV 25427-0890. DEADLINE: October 1.

CYBERBEAT

by Russell Clemings

NASW's Internet discussion lists (a.k.a. listservs) have been among its most popular online services since their inception more than a decade ago. But the technology has improved since the early days. Many members may be unaware of how our current Mailman list software gives them the ability to manage their subscriptions in great detail. Here's how to get started on that.



To take advantage of these tools, you'll need your list passwords. These may be different from your NASW member Web site password. You should be receiving an e-mail on the first of every month with all of your list passwords. But if not, you can go to <http://lists.nasw.org>, click on the name of any list that you're subscribed to, and scroll down to the "unsubscribe or edit options" box on the resulting page. Enter the e-mail address that you're using for your subscription and click the button. On the next page, click the button marked "Remind" and your password will be sent to your inbox. Once you have your password, you can go back to the page you just left and log in to the list management page. There, you can (among other things):

- Change your list password or the e-mail address you're subscribed from.
- Turn your mail delivery on or off—a useful alternative to unsubscribing when you go on vacation.
- Change from regular list mode to digest mode, or vice versa. If you click the "change globally" box under any of these options, the change will take effect for all NASW.org lists, including those that don't appear on the list management page, such as NASW-Jobs and NASW-Announce. (By the way, if you do change your NASW-Announce address, please drop a line to Diane McGurgan (diane@nasw.org) so that she can update the membership database.)

Now, some highlights from recent list traffic. Check the list archives at NASW.org (Web site password required) for more.

nasw-freelance

Few issues are discussed more frequently on NASW-Freelance than contracts—their good and bad points, how to negotiate them, and in a question raised March 21 by freelance Susan Kershaw, whether to have

one at all: "I just got a new project from a new client who is doing a large project for a very well known biotech company," she wrote. "My contact then offered me the work and agreed to payment terms that I am satisfied with, but this was all done verbally..." "I'm not so comfortable working [with] no written agreement of the terms, especially with a new client that I have no history with."

Responses varied. But many shared her concern and urged her to get something in writing, if not a full-fledged contract. "I sometimes work without a contract with established clients, and I'm not a stickler for formal contracts even with new clients, but I do want at least the basic terms and conditions outlined in an e-mail, which I save," said Washington, D.C., biomedical writer Bob Roehr. Indiana freelancer Angie Roberts suggested that formal contracts may not be routinely necessary, if other documentation will suffice: "With most of my clients, I simply work off written estimates...I usually send written estimates as PDFs, then save the e-mail from the client stating that they have accepted the estimate."

Maryland health columnist Alan Wachter warned that, if nothing else, the terms and timing for payment should be clear in advance. "Sans contract, I would not undertake a large project for an unknown client without a fee agreement that requires a partial payment upon accepting the assignment, a partial payment halfway through, and a final payment upon completion," he wrote.

nasw-talk

On April 26, Mike Lemonick of *TIME* magazine voiced a pet peeve concerning PIO practices. "I frequently [get] invitations to various events—talks, panel discussions, that sort of thing—from PIOs and publicists. The topics are often fascinating, and I'd be inclined to attend. But the advance warning is just as often absurdly short—less than a week, in many cases, and sometimes just a day or two. Do public information people really think journalists have such uncluttered lives that they can make plans for these events on such short notice?"

John Toon, of the Georgia Institute of Technology, offered this explanation, which attributed the practice to precisely the opposite thinking: "I think there's a perception that life in the newsroom is so hectic that it's impossible to plan ahead. The view is that reporters (or their editors) make decisions about how to spend their time at the last minute based on what seems to be the most pressing issue that day. If that's true, then the invite received at the last minute could get more attention than one delivered a week or two head of time—and forgotten." A slightly different view came from Jim Hathaway, of the University of North Carolina-Charlotte: "In the PIO world, we have two issues that sometimes make us do stupid things, like send out national announcements on meetings just before they

Russell Clemings is NASW's cybrarian and a reporter for the Fresno Bee. Drop him a note at cybrarian@nasw.org or rclemings@gmail.com.

happen—the first is internal politics, which mandates that we do such announcements to begin with, and the second is the chaos of academic life and organization (which is no excuse, I know). So why bother people and send this out? Well, it is “possible” that someone might be really interested and still be able to find a way to come...and the university wants you to do something, even if it is fruitless.” ■

THE FREE LANCE

by Mary Beckman

Disability Insurance: To Buy or Not to Buy

A few winters back, I flipped my Jeep Wrangler and it landed on its top on the side of an interstate highway. After hanging upside down for a few minutes, I finally unclicked my seat belt and crawled out with a couple scratches on my hand. The Jeep was totaled. I was fine. My car insurance paid off the loan.

I can't help wondering why I don't have the same sort of protection for myself, aside from the obvious difference that no bank has a lien on me. But if I get hurt and can no longer perform my freelancing duties—if I crush my fingers in a bizarre can-opening accident, for example (I'm in denial about carpal tunnel possibilities)—all I have to fall back on is a meager savings account, a tiny IRA, and the kindness of my siblings.

We all know we're not supposed to touch our IRAs or other retirement funds—not if we have that lofty ideal of retiring someday. But that's what happened to my sister Catherine when a virus attacked her heart. Laid off a month before, disability insurance was farthest from her mind when, at 38 years of age, instead of finding a new job, she found she was facing a heart transplant. She was unable to work before and after her surgery and was too young to retire. There went her savings, and now she lives on Social Security Disability Insurance, surviving on less than a third of the income she had as a manager. “When you're in your 30s it seems you never think you're going to become disabled,” she says.

People don't think they will, but the Society of Actuaries (who analyze all kinds of risk) and the Census Bureau say it's actually somewhat common. The risk of becoming disabled for at least three months at age 35 ranges from a 1 in 2.5 to 1 in 2 chance. The odds go

down as you get older, and 55-year-olds can relax with their 1 in 3.7 chance. Overall, 1 in 7 people will become disabled for five or more years before they reach age 65. According to financial advisor Errold Moody in San Leandro, Calif., you're five times more likely to become disabled than be injured in a car accident. “Getting disability insurance is essential, but the odds of getting someone to buy it are slim to none,” Moody says.

I find these numbers alarming—it would seem people I know should be dropping off right and left—but my favorite statistic is the one that compares the risk to death. At age 42, you're 3.5 times more likely to become disabled than die. I don't know if that's good news or bad.

What I do understand is that without money coming in—even the feast or famine way it does while freelancing—bills don't get paid. About half of bankruptcies and home foreclosures are due to unexpected injuries or illnesses and disability.

Freelance writer Sharon Campbell advises “everyone to buy a disability policy when they get their first job, and to never let it go even if they are eating beans and rice at the end of the month.” She says her husband's policy helped them avoid losing their home or worse when he became permanently disabled.

But estimates are that only about a fourth of all U.S. workers have disability insurance and Moody thinks there are two reasons so few get it. “Disability” is not black and white, and the contracts read worse than Bulwer-Lytton's prose. “With life insurance, you're either dead or alive. With disability insurance, it's not clear what counts as disability, and you end up with contracts that can numb your mind,” Moody says.

Moody recommends finding an agent who's had at least 10 years of experience specifically dealing with disability insurance, because disability insurance is unlike other kinds of insurance, agents don't get much training in disability insurance, and financial planners who have to make recommendations for this insurance are generally untrained in the vagaries of the business. Larry Schneider of the Disability Insurance Resource Center in Albuquerque agrees, pointing out, “One of the misunderstandings that causes the most grief is satisfying the definition of ‘total disability.’”

The best contracts to have are those that pay when you can't do the job you've been doing since you grew up. These are called “own occupation” policies. They contain wording such as “You are totally disabled if you are unable to perform the material and substantial duties of your own occupation to age 65.” And words like “material and substantial” are open for interpretation. For example, a writer who travels to foreign places needs to be ambulatory, so injuries that interfere with her globetrotting would be disabling. Or having a stroke might interfere with a science writer's cognition and ability to write. But total disability requires that you



Mary Beckman is a freelance writer living in southeast Idaho who hopes her luck lasts just a little bit longer.

can't perform any of your duties. A neurosurgeon who can't see well enough to cut the right nerve, for example, but can still perform administrative duties might not qualify as "totally disabled."

And the industry thinks writers are special, according to Schneider. "As writers, you can have a lot of things go wrong and you'll still be able to work. A lot of people who get broken legs might be laid up, but for many writers, it's more of an inconvenience."

And this multi-talented version of writers is not necessarily an advantage. "Writers are not the favorite people in the disability insurance industry," he says. Even though he says on the one hand that writers won't be the liability that, say a ditch digger is to the insurance company, it's also harder for insurance companies to define what disability means for a writer.

For that reason, insurance companies might gauge disability in a writer's "own occupation" for two years, and then define it as "any" job after that. "As far as a writer's concerned, just because you can't write doesn't mean you can't do something else," Schneider says. Goodbye active voice, hello Kroger Grocery.

That doesn't mean disability insurance isn't worth the money, just as Campbell says. Most policies replace about 60 percent of your income. For self-employed freelancers, companies determine the value not based on your total income, but on a percentage of your net income. When I called a local agent recently to investigate, they based the benefit on 75 percent of what I told them I made (for which 60 percent would be replaced). And the payouts to you the disabled are usually tax-free.

But it is expensive—more expensive than life insurance, and maybe about the same as car insurance (well, I *did* total a car), but probably more. You can expect to pay about three percent of your income for long-term disability. But critical to the cost are how long it takes to kick in after you've been laid up, called the elimination period—30 days will be more expensive than a year; and how long it lasts—10 years will cost you more than five. Other points to be aware of are inflation riders—you can pay more to get cost-of-living increases for coverage, either before or after becoming disabled. The good thing, says Schneider, is that "insurance is sold by the pound." Policies can be customized to your needs, bank account, and level of optimism.

But don't go it alone. In many states, people can be licensed as "disability insurance analysts," though consumers might have a hard time finding them. Moody is one, and he says he has about 30 colleagues in the entire state of California. He doesn't recommend taking policies to attorneys for their opinion, because most are not trained. Also, your agents or brokers will be helping you with any claims, so their expertise will be critical to the ease with which your particular situation is handled.

Interestingly, another potential source of disability

cash is life insurance policies. Most life insurance policies offer riders that waive the premiums should you become disabled. With some "whole life policies," life insurance can pay back money for emergencies after people have paid in a certain amount of money to the policy.

For those of us lucky enough to be tempting fate while deciding if it's worth the investment, we might want to carefully consider the words of fellow writers who had health disasters befall them. Freelance and textbook author Jennie Dusheck in Santa Cruz, Calif. regrets not getting disability insurance before her spine started giving her trouble. She says, "I don't have it, could never get it now, but people should get it, should, should, should!" After all, luck can't hold out forever. ■

PIO FORUM

by Sue Nichols

Embedded Communicators—it's not just for war anymore.

We've all experienced it. We even revel in it—the adrenaline rush that comes with the 11th-hour notification from *Science* or *Nature* that a scintillating discovery is rushing though the embargo pipeline like a bullet train. That frantic stalking of the elusive principle investigator, the thrill of yet again transforming an incomprehensible paper into an enlightening and interesting story.

But then there's that deflated feeling when it's over. Today's breaking news quickly fades into the archives. In the harsh light of embargo day, I have this sinking knowledge that I may quickly forget the PI's name.

The explosion of the Web and its 24/7 demand for updated content cries for short stories—and more of them. But this new landscape of science communication doesn't necessarily mean the death of relationships between communicators and researchers. That terrain is dotted with opportunities for communicators to talk to more people, to tell a good story in ways that often are overlooked in daily science writing.

It's time for science to take a page from the war. Science communication can benefit from investing time on the front lines—eating, sleeping, and sweating a little with the men and women of science. The time has come for both sides to invest in embedded communicators.

On behalf of Michigan State University, I've embedded, and have become evangelical about its worth, even as I admit I'm only just exploring both the possibilities and the logistical challenges.

The benefits of embedding—of hunkering down with a research project long before the results are logged

Sue Nichols is senior communications manager for science and research at Michigan State University.

—are an investment with potential high dividends:

- Stories that can be crafted for a variety of needs and thus spread your institution's message far and wide. It's easier to justify spending time and money when you make a lot of people happy. Plan it right and you'll have materials that can populate the worlds of individual colleges, alumni, development, funding agencies, student recruiters, and governmental affairs.
- Rich, people-driven stories that paint a compelling picture not only of research results, but of a process that is usually not understood or appreciated. It's a much-needed chance to explain "this is what scientists do!"
- Going boldly to places not everyone can get to—and thus having highly marketable material.
- Images. For pitching, or when negotiating for space internally, the magic words are: "I have art." Decent, hi-resolution photos, and video, especially from places not easily obtained by outsiders, gives a story access—and play.

My first embed was in the summer of 2002. A staff videographer and I accompanied Jianguo "Jack" Liu to China. Jack was working primarily on a National Science Foundation biodiversity grant, studying panda habitat in the Wolong Nature Reserve. It was an obvious place to give it a shot—the combination of a compelling story, multidisciplinary, cutting-edge science, student involvement, and cute animals rang all the bells of saleable story. And it was a story inaccessible to most.

Jack appreciated the power of telling people about his research, about the powerful impact his work could have on global policy, and the strong ties biodiversity has on human health. What started with my frustration at the limitations of a news release spun into a global road trip.

Jack had NSF funds available; my university relations office was persuaded to donate staff time. We focused on two goals: Greedy mining of stories, photos, and video footage, and taking a shot at directly telling the story on the Web with dispatches from the field.

So began our 12-day sojourn into a scientist's world. We traveled seemingly nonstop, from Beijing to northernmost Inner Mongolia to the mountains of Sichuan Province that shelter the world's few remaining pandas (see photo at right). We sat in meetings and climbed a mountain (sometime using a GPS pole as a hiking stick). We lunched with a family of five generations in one house in Wolong; people who lived much of what Jack studies.

We learned a lot about our craft—much of it out of sheer panic and desperation. It reminded us of what's possible and pushed us to try new things. The results: seven online dispatches from the



(top) Sue Nichols sorts through chili peppers in a Rwanda village; part of a Michigan State University specialty agriculture project to help rebuild this war-torn country. (below) Sue with a panda pal, in China.

field that we also featured on NSF's home page, some 900 photo images, 10 hours of professional video, and a Web site accessible to a wide audience that carried the message that science is fascinating, fun, and compelling. Both MSU and NSF still extensively use the materials, as have schools, journalists, and others.

Rwanda coffee was more ambitious. MSU had conceptualized and led an effort to develop the lucrative—yet unknown—crop of specialty coffee in Rwanda, offering a way for genocide survivors in the ravaged country to make a living and rebuild their lives. The product was coming onto the market, yet already MSU was losing its grip on the story. I went to Rwanda as writer, photographer, and ultimately marketer.

Not only was I able to document a remarkable story, I could show, in a highly personal way, the incredible commitment of our university's faculty, and the amazing contribution such a commitment can make.

More experienced now, we wrote up an expansive plan that cast my department as a driver to illustrate MSU's land-grant role, its global impact, and to sell coffee. I not only wrote stories for the Web and internal publications, but also for grant applications, awards, and partners. I wrote coffee labels, brochures, tent cards, and radio promos. My photos appeared in major newspapers.

MSU alone has sold more than a ton of Rwanda specialty coffee, contributing a portion of each sale directly back to the project.

Embedding can be done on a lot of levels. Rwanda and China are admittedly ambitious, but I'm also working on projects in my own state—and not always in Michigan's most glamorous counties.



Tips:

- **Choose projects wisely.** Projects with a scientific process as compelling as the results—and with good visuals. Pick projects that can speak to overriding themes or messages. Rwanda coffee was a good story for the project, but it also was a way to tell people what it meant to be a land-grant university in the 21st century—a message that coincided with our university's 150th anniversary.
- **Have foresight.** Good research results are even better if you can show people what it took to get there. I'm currently eyeing a project that involves collecting data in the Great Lakes by using novel instrumentation. The results look promising—but by the time I write that story the whole dumping-an-expensive-machine-in-the-lake thing will be long over. The story of getting that machine there, and the pictures, will be invaluable.
- **Be strategic.** Getting buy-in requires being clear on what you expect to gather while spending time with a researcher, and what you intend to do with the information. Talk to the PIs and find out what they need out of the communication. Calculate how a project can figure into larger initiatives.
- **Be clear on what you need from the PI.** Put your needs in writing. It's imperative to remember we don't speak the same language. I nearly stumbled on a fast trip to Nicaragua because the PI didn't fully understand how much I'd need his physical presence. Sending a communicator to the field with a graduate student isn't enough. It was crucial for me to portray an MSU faculty member and get pictures of them in the field.
- **Pull funding agencies in early.** Federal funding agencies—most notably the NSF—offer tremendous bounce from their expansive Web sites. NSF's Web partnership on the China panda excursion widely expanded our visibility—and our impact. Giving them an early heads up can bring valuable partnerships and opportunities to showcase your institution's work.
- **Learn to multi-task and be economically efficient.** Funding is often scarce for this work. Being able to write and shoot stills has made me value-added as a communicator. Having said that, also know your limitations. It's hard work to shuffle between writer and photographer, yet embedding usually only offers one chance.

There are signs, too, that science is looking for more communicator/researcher interaction. Look at NSF. It has introduced its Broader Impact Criterion, a second leg of its grant process that requires investigators to not only justify the worth of the proposed project, but also explain how they'll share that with the public. This is ripe territory for communicators to help.

It may not be quite a marriage proposal...but as science writers, we can recognize it as a sign of science's considering a long-term commitment with us. ■

NEWS FROM AFAR

by Jim Cornell

The divide between science journalists and science communicators, once wide and seemingly unbridgeable, has narrowed in recent years as the members of the first group have increasingly joined the ranks of the second.

The reasons for this shift are as much practical as ideological. With traditional news media in decline, many journalists, freelancers as well as former staff writers, have found new outlets—and careers—in other forms of science communication. Not surprisingly, perhaps, many have found the switch to be liberating, invigorating, and intellectually rewarding.

NASW members who might like to apply their new-found skills on a global scale, communicating health, technology, and science information in ways that directly benefit individuals and communities, may be interested in a proposed international "academy" devoted to promoting such activities.

The academy was announced in May at the ninth conference of the International Network on Public Communication of Science and Technology (PCST), in Seoul, South Korea. The brainchild of Vladimir de Semir, current PCST chair as well as the Commissioner for Scientific Culture, of Barcelona, Spain, the academy would provide a means for the network to sponsor research and organize other activities relating to science communication worldwide.

Although originally founded by an eclectic mix of journalists, teachers, sci-tech communicators, and researchers, PCST gradually became more academic, publishing journals and books and holding biennial conferences, all with an emphasis on evaluating, if not always elevating, "public understanding of science."

However, the changing media landscape, in which old media has been replaced by new technologies allowing easy and almost instant access to information by individuals worldwide, has also changed PCST's focus and contributed in part to its need for a structure that can coordinate efforts by both academics and the growing number of journalists-turned-communicators.

In fact, de Semir himself was a science and medical editor with one of Barcelona's major newspapers before joining the faculty of Pompeu Fabra University as director of its master's program in science communication.

Jim Cornell is president of the International Science Writers Association. Send items of interest—international programs, conferences, events, etc.—to cornelljc@earthlink.net.

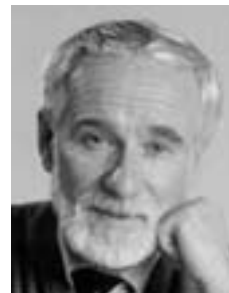


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

"Currently, all of our members work as part-time volunteers, but this has not met the increasing global demand for better research and practices in the field of science communication," he told a reporter for SciDev.Net.

Among those demands is the call issued in Seoul for more public debate about sci-tech issues. Rather than simply providing "expert" information, scientists and their communicators are urged to engage in direct and open dialogues with target audiences. Hee-Je Bak, a professor of science communication at Korea's Kyung-Hee University, told SciDev.Net that such debates promote a better balance of power between scientists and the public, especially in the developing world.

According to de Semir, the academy will be formally established this summer, although no location was announced in Seoul. Given de Semir's position in the municipal government, Barcelona would seem a logical selection, especially since the city will also be the venue for the next Euroscience Open Forum (ESOF 2007), a meeting always heavy on science communication events.

As NASW's Bruce Lewenstein of Cornell University and a member of the PCST executive committee points out, no matter where it is located, the academy will be a global enterprise, coordinating current PCST activities, expanding its efforts in the developing world, and establishing a Web site that may serve as worldwide resource on science communication.

The Fifth World Conference of Science Journalists (WCSJ 07) to be held in Melbourne, Australia, next April was officially "launched" in that city in May with the convening of a panel of Australian journalists—plus NASW member Peter Calamai of the *Toronto Star*—that attempted to define "science stories" for a group of potential supporters, including local scientists, politicians, and business executives.

The effort apparently was worth making, for the event marked "the end of the beginning," according to conference director Niall Byrne.

"A hotel has been chosen: the Grand Hyatt in central Melbourne. We have seed sponsorship from Australian state and federal governments, and strong interest from across the world—including several Canadian agencies," reports Byrne.

"Fortunately, we also have a fantastic mix of people on our various planning committees—with representation of 11 countries, including Canada, Colombia, the UK, the USA, Germany, Hungary, Nigeria, Japan, New Zealand, Egypt and Finland. Many of these same people contributed to the success of the fourth WCSJ held in Montreal in 2004," he adds.

"We believe Montreal was a watershed in the creating of a global community of science journalists," Byrne says. "Now the mantle has been passed to Melbourne."

To expand on the Montreal model, Byrne and his fellow organizers have identified three important goals: strengthen the Australian science-journalism community, bring Australian science and scientists to the attention of a global audience, and, maintain and increase the international network of science journalists while enhancing the quality and quantity of science reporting worldwide.

"Over the next few months, the program will come together as we select from the many ideas we've received from across the world," says Byrne. "However, we are still looking for more ideas and comments. Every suggestion will go to our program committee for review by working journalists."

For more information, or to submit ideas, visit www.ScienceInMelbourne2007.org; or, e-mail Sarah Brooker at sarah@scienceinmelbourne2007.org.

SciDev.Net, the science news service for, by, and about the developing world, marked a major milestone in 2005, completing its first full year of "normal" operations. (Its first three years were considered the "launch phase.") And, in recognition of that achievement, the organization did what most major enterprises do: It issued an "annual report."

That document—actually entitled "Annual Review 2005"—lists some fairly impressive statistics.

News is the strength of the SciDev.Net Web site and, by the end of 2005, the service was averaging some 60 original stories a month. Most of those stories were written by freelancers from some 39 countries in the developing world. And, in 2005, the number of contributors—some of them first-time science journalists—rose from 77 to 123.

In addition to original material, SciDev.Net has agreements with both *Nature* and *Science* for the free use of articles and papers of relevance to readers in the developing world. In 2005, SciDev.Net's subscribers had access to more than 100 such articles.

Conversely, news outlets and Web sites around the developing world were encouraged to reprint any material from SciDev.Net at no cost. Indeed, anything on the SciDev.Net Web site can be reproduced by any media at no cost provided the source and author are credited. (Full disclosure: I couldn't have written about PCST without drawing on the original reports of Jia Hepeng, SciDev.Net's China coordinator.)

To facilitate this sharing of news and information, SciDev.Net introduced a free RSS feed directly to personal computers as soon as news stories were posted. Efforts are now underway to introduce Spanish and Chinese versions of these feeds.

To see the diversity of materials available online (backgrounders, topical dossiers, editorials, book reviews, education and fellowship opportunities, meet-

ings, job listings, and more), as well as to sample the rich and fascinating wealth of news from otherwise ignored corners of the world, click on www.scidev.net. ■

Upcoming international meetings

Sept. 2-9, 2006. The BA Festival of Science, Norwich, England. The British Association for the Advancement of Science's annual meeting—looser and more public-oriented than the AAAS, but still a big attraction for European press. Information at www.the-ba.net.

Nov. 26-28, 2006. Challenges and Vision in Science Communication, New Delhi, India. Sponsored by the Indian National Centre for Science Communicators (NCSC), the conference is open to professionals (and students) in education, research, and science communication and will focus on challenges in science education, science and society interaction, and science/technology policies. For more information, contact Suhas B. Naik-Satam at mavipa@vsnl.com.

April 16-20, 2007. The 5th World Conference of Science Journalists (WCSJ2007), Melbourne, Australia. Information at www.scienceinmelbourne2007.org.

OUR GANG

by Jeff Grabmeier

Landing A Big Honor. Three NASW members were among the winners of the 2005-2006 Michael E. DeBakey Journalism Awards, presented by The Foundation for Biomedical Research. The award honors exceptional news coverage of biomedical research that involves laboratory animals. The winner of the "Print—Large Market" category was **Bijal Trivedi**, a D.C.-based freelance writer, for an article in *New Scientist* about a potentially life-saving medical procedure involving suspended animation. New Yorker **Mara Bovsun**, a features editor of the *AKC Gazette*, was the winner in the "Print—Small Market"



PHOTO BY JO MCNULTY, OHIO STATE

Jeff Grabmeier is assistant director of research communications at Ohio State University in Columbus, OH. Send news about your life to Jeff at Grabmeier@nasw.org.

category for a report that investigated a unique clinical trial designed to help dogs dying of cancer. The winner in the Internet category was **Arlene Weintraub**, an associate editor for *Business Week*'s science and technology department in New York, for part of a series featuring the genetic work researchers are undertaking to eliminate a variety of human diseases. Weintraub also received an honorable mention in the "Print—Large Market" category for a related story. Send congratulations to Bijal at bijal.trivedi@mac.com, Mara at St1Angel@aol.com, and Arlene at arlene_weintraub@yahoo.com.

Biggest Fish in the Pond. Another trio of NASWers received a big honor: They were selected to participate in the National Tropical Botanical Garden's Environmental Journalism Fellowship Program. The talented winners, all freelance writers, included **Lynne Friedmann** of Solana Beach, Calif. (lfriedmann@nasw.org), **A.J. Appel** of Somerville, Mass. (ajappe@nasw.org), and **Brian Vastag** of Washington, D.C. (vastag@nasw.org). The program was held May 8 to 13, on the island of Kauai, Hawaii. The Environmental Journalism Fellowship provides journalists in broadcast, print, and online media information about tropical ecosystems and deep background in tropical ecology to enhance the accuracy of reporting on science and environment issues. Way to go Lynne, A.J., and Brian!

A Reel Winner. Freelancer **Dan Ferber**, of Indianapolis, will have one of his articles appear in *The Best of Technology Writing 2006*, the first in an annual series published by digitalculturebooks, an imprint of the University of Michigan Press. The article, titled, "Will Artificial Muscle Make You Stronger?" originally appeared in *Popular Science*, in September 2005. Dan can be found at ferber@nasw.org.

Trolling for Downloaders. Mignon Fogarty's podcast called *Absolute Science* has really hit its stride. For those of you who don't know, *Absolute Science* focuses on a few current news stories each week and delves into the science behind them. After just a few months, the podcast has passed the 60,000 download mark. Although ratings jump around a lot in the podcast world, *Absolute Science* is often in the Top 25 science podcasts at iTunes, the Top 3 science podcasts at Yahoo (sometimes it is at #1), and the Top 20 technology podcasts at Podcast Alley. People can download the podcast from a variety of places, including Mignon's Web site at www.welltopia.com. She is at mignon@welltopia.com.

Moving Down the Pike. Freelancer **John Gever** is on the move. He hauled his No. 2 pencils and reporter's notebooks from Morgantown to Wheeling, West Va. He reports that it's "not many miles in geography (75, to be precise) but parsecs in terms of culture and economy." You can ask John to quantify exactly how many parsecs separate the two cities by writing him at jever@nasw.org.

This Job's a Keeper. PIO **Jim Barlow** has undertaken a much longer move, both in miles and, presumably,

cultural parsecs. Jim will be leaving the news bureau at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign after nearly 14 years to move to Eugene, Ore. He will become the director of science, research, and internal communications in the Office of Public and Governmental Affairs at the University of Oregon. In addition to promoting science, Jim will be helping to rebuild the media relations office after an extensive overhaul. Jim will remain at jimibarlow@mac.com.

Save the Fishes! Nancy Bazilchuk, a freelancer from Norway, has been selected to chair the Society of Environmental Journalists' annual conference, to be held this year in Burlington, Vt., from October 25-29. You can find Nancy at bazilchu@hf.ntnu.no.

Lured Away. After 10 years as a science writer and columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*, K.C. Cole has a new job. As of January 2006, she is a visiting professor at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School of Journalism. K.C. reports she is developing a specialized master's program in science journalism for the school. Her e-mail address is kccole@usc.edu.

Offering Fresh Bait. Phillip Manning, a freelancer from Chapel Hill, NC, has added a free, one-page weekly newsletter to complement his popular Web site www.scibooks.org. "Science Book News" briefly describes science books that have been published recently or are scheduled to be published. To subscribe, contact Phil at pvmanning@mindspring.com.

Tackle A New Project. Maura Mackowski, a freelancer from Gilbert, Ariz., is in the midst of a three-year contract with NASA to research and write a history of the agency's life sciences and medical endeavors from 1980 to 2005. The end result will be a book, and Maura expects to give some conference presentations on her findings, as well. Talk to Maura at maura_mackowski@hotmail.com.

Gone Fishin'. After years of fighting metaphorical fires as assistant vice president of news and communications at Duke University, Dennis Meredith finally retired at the end of March—only to be confronted by a real fire. Dennis and his wife moved to a cabin in the mountains of North Carolina in April, only to be evacuated several times within the first week because of raging forest fires. The flames came within 50 feet of their cabin, but in the end their house was saved by firefighters. Ask Dennis for the details at meredith@nasw.org.

A Website without Pier. British freelancer David Bradley has updated his Sciencebase.com Web site with some tools that science writers may find useful. Go to www.sciencebase.com/tools_scientific_computing.html and check out the left hand box, which provides a one-stop shop for links to Google Scholar, Elsevier's Scirus, the physical sciences portal PSigate, and the all-new Windows Live Academic search engine. The second box is a bit more specialized and allows users to look up scientific acronyms, search Wikipedia science, and do find

research papers from their DOI identification number. David is at david.bradley@sciencebase.com

Gardens are Good for Nightcrawlers! Kathryn Brown, principal of EndPoint Creative (www.endpoint-creative.biz) is returning to her roots, with a new botanical blog (<http://thelittlegarden.blogspot.com>) and consulting work for the U.S. Botanic Garden in Washington, D.C. Previously, as a freelance journalist, Brown frequently wrote about plant science and did a stint in two plant pathology labs. Start growing a conversation with Kathryn at kbrown@endpointcreative.biz.

Hooked A Big Award. Sharon Friedman, professor of journalism and communication and director of the Science and Environmental Writing Program at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Penn., was recently awarded the university's Hillman Faculty Award. The honor recognizes excellence in teaching or research work, or for advancing the interests of the University. Sharon's research focuses on how scientific, environmental, and risk issues are communicated to the public, particularly by the mass media. Send your regards to Sharon at sharon.friedman@lehigh.edu.

Top of the Marine Food Chain. The Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Mass., awarded its Science Journalism Fellowship to 12 writers this year, five of whom are NASW members. The program allows promising science journalists from around the globe to "step into the shoes of the scientists they cover," by living and studying at the Woods Hole laboratory. NASW members are: Marc Airhart of *Earth and Sky* (mairhart@earthsky.com), Allan Coukell of WBUR-FM (allan@coukell.com), Natasha Mitchell of the Australian Broadcasting Corp. (natasha.mitchell@your.abc.net.au), Susanne Rust of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (squick@journalsentinel.com), and Corinna Wu of AAAS *Science Update* (ckwu@nasw.org). ■

REGIONAL GROUPS

by Suzanne Clancy

New England

Members of the New England Science Writers Association made a Cape Cod journey, in March, to the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute (WHOI). The Saturday visit included a slide show covering WHOI's history, an overview of WHOI's autonomous under-



PHOTO BY MARC LIEBERMAN

Suzanne Clancy manages corporate communications for Nanogen, Inc, in San Diego, Calif. Send information about regional meetings and events to sclancyphd@yahoo.com.

water vehicles, and a look at "Alvin," WHOI's deep submergence vehicle that has made more than 3,700 dives.

In May, the deputy consul general of Germany (in Boston), Bernd Rinnert, hosted a dinner for NESW members at a boutique hotel, in Cambridge, not far from MIT. About 45 science writers attended and heard a featured talk by Nobel laureate Phil Sharp, of MIT, who explained the breakthrough technology of RNA interference and how biotech companies are positioning themselves to turn RNAi into medical treatments.

Philadelphia

The Philadelphia-area Science Writers Association is announcing its new Web site (www.paswa.org). While the NASW site has upgraded with a more modern look, PASWA has taken a decidedly bare bones approach that befits the group's informal nature. Taking a tip from a past speaker to the group, the site uses the free WordPress blogging software as a content management system. PASWA found this approach to allow for a clean, professional-looking Web site that is easy to maintain and modify—without all the fuss of having a Webmaster that actually knows the details of Web mechanics. The new site features local job listings, upcoming events, and space for members to crow about their work.

San Diego

In March, SANDSWA attended "The Bushmeat Crisis" Symposium, sponsored by the Zoological Society of San Diego's Conservation and Research for Endangered Species (CRES). The bushmeat-hunting crisis is having an alarming impact on many species in Africa, including primates. (www.seafoodwatch.org), who reminded the audience that bushmeat issues are not limited to developing nations, but that over-harvesting of the world's fisheries can be viewed in a similar light. Members of WILDCOAST (www.wildcoast.net) discussed its innovative and effective public campaign in Mexico directed at reducing consumption of sea turtle eggs, traditionally believed to enhance male sexual potency.

In June, SANDSWA members received a behind-the-scenes preview of the San Diego Natural History Museum's (www.sdnhm.org) "Fossil Mysteries." This new, permanent exhibit showcases the last 75 million years in the southern California and Baja California bioregion—an area with a rich fossil record that includes mammoths, sea cows, lions, dinosaurs, giant sloths, whales, walruses, and saber-toothed cats. "This is much more than a walk through time," said Tom Deméré, PhD, exhibition curator and SDNHM curator of paleontology. Taking an inquiry-based approach, the exhibit presents fossil evidence and complex questions that encourage visitors to "solve" the ecology/evolution/extinction/earth process mysteries themselves. ■

2006 ANNUAL MEETING AND WORKSHOPS

Make plans to attend the 2006 NASW Science-in-Society Meeting and Workshops, in Baltimore. The meeting begins at noon on Friday, Oct. 27, with our traditional network lunch, and closes at noon Saturday, Oct. 28, with the popular science-network lunch.

There will be four general topic tracks presented over the two days. Each track will feature three seminars. Here's the line-up as *ScienceWriters* went to press. Session titles are subject to change. Online registration starts in August (www.nasw.org/meeting).

A. Science is a Story:

- 1) The Writer's Toolbox
- 2) Press Room Confidential—How To Cover a Scientific Meeting
- 3) Pitch Slam

B. The Electronic Gutenberg:

- 1) Navigating New Media
- 2) Podcasting for Science Writers
- 3) Copyright in the Internet Age

C. Doing the Media Two-Step:

- 1) PIO Basics—What Nobody Ever Thinks to Tell You
- 2) Boot Camp for Book Publicity
- 3) Can You Publish It Yourself? (seminar on electronic self-publishing)

D. Getting It Right:

- 1 & 2) Special Two-Session Seminar on Covering Clinical Trials
- 3) Covering Controversial Science and Public Policy (focus on earth science and climate change) ■

NOTICES FROM DIANE

by Diane McGurgan

Coalition Requirements Met

Thank you to the members who took the time to fill out the annual Authors Coalition Survey. NASW had been working against a coalition requirement of a survey response of at least 60 percent of its membership. Had NASW not reached that goal by next year it stood to lose its fair share of funds. I'm delighted to report a 66.8 percent return on the last survey. So we're good for another year.



PHOTO BY ANDREW SKOLNICK

Membership Directory

The NASW membership directory was mailed in late June. If your name is not listed it means your dues arrived too late for inclusion in this year's directory. Many thanks to Larry Krumenaker who, once again, did a marvelous job putting it all together.

Find Members Fast

In addition to the printed roster, you can find members fast by logging onto the membership directory section of the NASW Web site. In addition to speed and ease of use, the online directory is updated on a monthly basis, making it the most accurate database of member information.

Keep the NASW Database Current

Of course, none of the above (roster and electronic database) works unless members notify NASW when their contact information has changed. Every year when dues letters and reminder notices are sent out, a great number are returned because a member's address changes and they fail to notify NASW. The result is wasted postage and stationery, not to mention a barrage of e-mails and phone calls from members who wonder why they're no longer receiving the newsletter and other services. So PLEASE send an e-mail to diane@nasw.org if any of your contact information changes during the year. Thank you.

Victor Cohn Prize

Deadline for the sixth annual Victor Cohn Prize for Excellence in Medical Science Reporting is July 31, 2006. The award will be presented this fall at the CASW 44th Annual New Horizons in Science Briefing for Journalists (www.casw.org/newhoriz.htm).

NASW Fall Workshop/CASW New Horizons

The NASW Science-in-Society Meeting and Workshops take place Oct. 27-28, 2006. See page 29 for a preview of the program line-up. Workshop registration goes live in August. The 44th annual CASW New Horizons in Science Briefing will be held Oct. 28-31 (immediately following the NASW Science-in-Society meeting). New Horizons is hosted by Johns Hopkins University, in Baltimore. For more information, see the CASW Web site (www.casw.org) or watch the mail for program and registration information.

New Horizons Traveling Fellowships

CASW offers Traveling Fellowships of up to \$1,000 each to cover the costs of attending the New Horizons Briefing. The fellowships are intended primarily for jour-

nalists from publications and broadcast outlets that do not routinely cover major science meetings or employ a full-time science writer. Application deadline is Sept. 1, 2006. ■

IN MEMORIAM

Thomas Jones Sellers, Jr.

Known for storytelling ability, Pulitzer Prize

Thomas Jones Sellers, Jr. died in Atlanta, Ga. on Feb. 18, at the age of 83. A few weeks before his death he worked on his final story—his obituary.

Sellers shared a 1955 Pulitzer Prize for public service. A robust 6-foot-5, Sellers needed his brawn when he was assigned to lead a team of *Columbus* (Ga.) *Ledger* reporters as they exposed the corruption and criminal element that controlled, in those days, both the courthouse and the police department and threatened to choke the life out of Phenix City.

A memorable photograph taken Election Day 1955 shows Sellers among a group of reporters who were beaten bloody by local racketeers. He was there because he was a reporter and because he was a founding member of the Russell Betterment Association, the group that ultimately helped run the criminal element out of town.

Born in Auburn, Ala. Nov. 1, 1922, Sellers received a BS in journalism at Auburn University, in 1948. He fought with the 63rd Infantry in WWII, retiring as a major in the Army Reserve. After the war, Sellers worked at *The Associated Press* and the *Montgomery Advertiser* before joining the *Ledger* in 1950. He worked there 15 years as a reporter, editor, and columnist. His favorite subject was always people. "I'd watch people fishing for catfish on the riverbank. And 10 yards up river, they were dumping in raw sewage. But everybody has a dream," he said. "That's why they're on the riverbank."

Sellers wrote about people that others ignored. He later compiled 172 pages of these stories in a collection called *Valley Echoes*. It contained dozens of pieces that touched a generation of readers.

A newspaper colleague once described a downtown shopkeeper who told a friend that he needed to go on home. "Got to see what old Tom is writing about today."

From 1968 to 1983, Sellers served at Emory University as science editor and information officer.

(Source: *Ledger-Enquirer.com* and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution)

Lawrence Bush

ScienceWriters has learned of the death of Lawrence Bush, of Jackson, Miss. ■

BOOKS BY AND FOR MEMBERS

by Ruth Winter

***Shattered Nerves: How Science Is Solving Modern Medicine's Most Perplexing Problem* by Victor D. Chase (NASW), published by Johns Hopkins University Press.**

Victor Chase takes the reader on a journey into a new medical frontier, where a category of implants known as neural prosthetics returns sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and movement to the paralyzed. These devices which replace damaged circuitry in the nervous system, also hold the potential to resolve psychiatric illnesses, restore the ability to form memories in damaged brains, and even to endow the able-bodied with superhuman powers by increasing learning capacity and extending the visible and audible wavelengths. Chase spent two years traveling and interviewing researchers and patients alike in order to tell the stories of these miraculous devices through the eyes and ears of those who are creating them and in whom they are being tested. A freelance science writer for 30 years, Chase became fascinated with the promise of neural prosthetics and the people working in the field while writing magazine articles on the subject. In a book review, Michael S. Gazzaniga, author of *The Ethical Brain* and a member of the President's Council on Bioethics wrote "Victor Chase has looked into the future of broken nervous systems and how we might fix them—with all of the corresponding hopes and perils. It is a fascinating book, both stimulating and exciting, and makes you think about what it means to be human." Chase can be reached at vdc@nasw.org, or 914-243-0585. The press representative is Christina Cheakalos, 410-516-6939, cac@press.jhu.edu.



***Down to the Sea for Science: 75 Years of Ocean Research, Education, and Exploration* by Vicky Cullen (NASW), self-published by Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.**

Cullen, a 32-year veteran of the organization's communications staff, has written an abundantly illustrated 184-page book that chronicles pivotal moments in the formation and history of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI). The first chapter, covering the years from 1863 to 1929, describes influential personalities and events that led to establishment of the first oceanographic laboratory on the U.S. East Coast. WHOI joined an already thriving research community in Woods Hole, Mass., in 1930. The story takes the institution from a summer-only, "gentlemen scientist" venue through major expansion for war research in

the 1940s and on to its position as a major player in worldwide oceanographic research. It includes profiles of those who have helped to make WHOI a vibrant place for scientific research, stories of the many research vessels that have contributed to ocean science, and sidebars about various oceanographic and historical topics. In addition, it features six continuing research themes—the Gulf Stream, air-sea interaction, gelatinous animals ("jellies"), marine geology and geophysics, chemistry, and microbiology. The book is available at www.whoi.edu/75th/book/index.html, and Cullen, now a freelance, may be contacted at vcullen@whoi.edu or 508-548-1027.

***Great Feuds in Mathematics: Ten of the Liveliest Disputes Ever* by Hal Hellman (NASW), published by John Wiley and Sons, Inc.**

This is Hal Hellman's 13th book and the fourth in his *Great Feuds* series. Aimed squarely at those who think math is an exact and staid field of endeavor, he writes "When my editor at Wiley suggested that I do a book on *Great Feuds in Mathematics*, I was not excited by the idea... Mathematics, I felt, is a cold, logical discipline where questions can be decided, if not quickly, at least objectively and decisively... How could there be feuds in mathematics? But my editor persisted. So I did it. It was tough, and took a full two and a half years, but it was an eye-opener." Hellman noted some of the disputes are purely mathematical in character; others are fueled by greed, jealousy, ambition, and ego. The New Jersey freelance says all have plots worthy of a soap opera, pitting not only professional mathematicians against each other, but brother against brother, father against son, and mentor against student. In the *New Scientist* review of the book, Duncan Graham-Rowe wrote, "There's nothing like a good feud to grab your attention. And when it comes to describing the battle, Hal Hellman is a master." Contact Hellman at hal.hellman@earthlink.net or 201-947-5534. The press representative is Naomi Rothwell, NRothwell@wiley.com.

ScienceWriters welcomes letters to the editor

A letter must include a daytime telephone number and e-mail address. Letters may be edited.

Letters submitted may be used in print or digital form by NASW. Send to Editor, *ScienceWriters*, P.O. Box 1725 Solana Beach, CA 92075, fax 858-793-1144, or e-mail lfriedmann@nasw.org.

***Daring Docs: High Drama in Journal AMA Papers and Other Investigative Reporting* by Milton Golin (NASW), published by ASJA Press, an imprint of iUniverse.**

A decorated U.S. Air Force transoceanic navigator, and certified meteorologist for his flights across the Himalayan "Hump" in World War II, Golin in his book, runs the gamut of perilous war-and-peace events, from the dynamiting of an airliner to the heroism of 40 physicians in a deadly hurricane. Editor/publisher of *Computers and Medicine*, he describes a necessary armed mutiny kept secret for more than 50 years, his finding of a long-sought immigrant who 38 years earlier had foiled the assassination of Theodore Roosevelt, and he relates the sight of dozens of overloaded cargo planes crashing on runways of a Burma air base. For 12 years, Golin was an investigative reporter and editor at the City News Bureau, of Chicago, before his appointment as the first nonphysician assistant editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. For more information or review inquiries, contact Joe Yosten at 800-288-4677, ext. 501, or www.joe.yosten@iuniverse.com. Contact Golin at cptmdgolin@aol.com or 312-944-7753.

***Underwater to Get Out of the Rain: A Love Affair with the Sea* by Trevor Norton, published by Da Capo Press.**

Trevor Norton is a professor of marine biology at the University of Liverpool. From a starred *Publisher's Weekly* review: "This delightfully wry account of a lifetime enchanted by the sea should enshrine marine biologist Norton in the pantheon of sea-struck pioneers he brilliantly profiled in his earlier *Stars Beneath the Sea*." Norton details a love affair that began in his hometown of Whitley Bay, a fading English resort town, where he one day dived into the water and discovered a "fresh and alive sea" that was "everything that the land wasn't." Whether discussing the sea lions of southern California or the coral gardens of Sharm el Sheikh, Norton writes in a tongue-in-cheek style. He is equally adept at elucidating the politics behind the pollution he finds in places such as the Philippines—where fishermen have been allowed to dynamite and poison coral reefs—as he is at illuminating the beauty of what others might consider odd, such as the "magical properties" of slime as used by the limpets off the Isle of Man. The press representative is Lissa Warren, lissawarren@perseusbooks.com.

***The Ghost Hunters* by Deborah Blum (NASW), published by Penguin Press.**

Pulitzer Prize winner Blum, professor of science journalism at the University of Wisconsin, has written about what she says is actually a "cool story" for a science writer. She starts out with the question: "What if a world-renowned professor of psychology at Harvard University, a doctor and scientist acclaimed as one of the leading intellects of the time, suddenly announced

that he believes in ghosts?" Blum writes that William James and two other outstanding thinkers, Richard Hodgson and James Hysop, staked their reputations, their careers, even their sanity on one of the most extraordinary (and entertaining) psychological quests ever undertaken. What they pursued—and what they found—raises questions as fascinating today as they were then, according to Blum. She concludes that the book is about the investigation of the ghost stories—the instances of supernatural phenomenon that could not be explained away—and it is about the courage and conviction of James and his colleagues to study science with an open mind. "At the heart of the story is the ongoing tension between empiricism and spiritualism—between a way that is grounded in a mixture of the evident and the hidden." Blum reveals that *Entertainment Weekly* is putting the book in the summer reader issue and says it's "a definite first for me." Blum can be reached at dblum@wisc.edu or 608-263-3395. The press representative is Sarah Hutson, 212-366-2826, sarah.hutson@us.penguingroup.com.

***Piccole Visioni—La Storia di una Grande Molecola* by Marta Paterlini (NASW), published by Codice Edizioni.**

The study of protein three-dimensional structure by X-ray crystallography is a cornerstone of modern biology. Nevertheless, it is something not well known in Italy despite Nobel Prize awards to its main characters, an ever-growing impact at the biomedical level and broad applications in the pharmaceutical field. *Piccole Visioni* follows the evolution of this discipline on the trail of the life of Max Perutz (Nobel Prize in Chemistry, 1962) and other scientists who founded one of the most avant-garde laboratories in the world, which hosted—among others—Watson, Crick, and the DNA molecule. Paterlini describes how a chemist from Vienna, Perutz, moved to Cambridge just before the Second World War broke out. He committed his entire life to a dream, an obsession according to some: the determination of the three-dimensional structure of hemoglobin, the vital molecule that carries oxygen in the blood. This book is the chronicle of an adventure where persistence and passion prevailed over 30 years of obstacles, both conceptual and technical. If you can read Italian or you wish to know more about the book, contact Paterlini, a New York freelance, at 212-758-2357 or matrapaterlini@libero.it.

***Nature's Restoration: People and Places on the Front Lines of Conservation* by Peter Friederici (NASW), published by Island Press/Shearwater Books.**

Peter Friederici, a Flagstaff, Ariz. freelance, profiles some of the dedicated citizens working to return sizable tracts of the American landscape to nature, and to health. He believes a restoration movement is sweeping North America and that it offers a new way for people

to coexist with nature—one that is neither domineering nor simplistic, but rather both difficult and deeply rewarding. “In an age of limits, it’s all too evident that people are only going to live in healthy surroundings if they can learn how to reverse some of the ecological harm they’ve done,” he says. Friederici first learned about the practice in the north suburbs of Chicago, where he grew up and where much pioneering work in the restoration of prairies and oak savannas began in the 1970s. Later he moved to Flagstaff, one of the centers of the movement to restore extensive tracts of southwestern ponderosa pine forest. In addition to describing those two projects, he also writes about:

- Bermuda, where one man has spent more than 40 years restoring a single 15-acre island
- Appalachia, where plant breeders are attempting to return vanished American chestnuts to the forest
- Glen Canyon, where activists are trying to drain Lake Powell
- Hawaii, where a growing ecological/cultural movement is working to restore the island of Kaho’olawe after more than two centuries of severe ecological abuse.

Nature’s Restoration describes not only the remarkable dedication of the people involved, but also the complexities of the work they do—ecological, economic, social, and cultural. Friederici can be reached at 928-774-3056 and pfried@nasw.org. The book’s publicist, Evan Johnson, can be reached at 202-232-7933 x 24 or ejohnson@islandpress.org.

Web re-release

Rh. *The Intimate History of a Disease and Its Conquest* by David Zimmerman (NASW).

Zimmerman’s book (with an introduction by James Watson), originally published in 1973, can now be downloaded via Yahoo at <http://bloodtransfusion.org/hottopics.html>. The Web site belongs to Liverpool University, in England, which is making the book available because the late Dr. Ronald Finn, one of the originators of the “Rh vaccine”—called RhoGAM in the U.S.—developed the preventive medication at that university. Thirty-eight years ago, Zimmerman quit his job as a reporter at *Medical World News* to write *Rh*, which depicts the key intellectual steps that led from the description of the disease, through the development and marketing of RhoGAM and similar preparations in the 1970s. Liverpool University hopes that mounting the book on the Internet will call attention to this successful research, which won the Lasker Prize, and contribute to public understanding of science. Zimmerman can be reached at tallsam@charter.net or 802-626-9750. ■

Send material about new books to Ruth Winter, 44 Holly Drive, Short Hills, NJ 07078, or e-mail ruthwrite@aol.com. Include the name of the publicist and appropriate contact information, as well as how you prefer members get in touch with you.

NEW MEMBERS

ALABAMA: Jennifer Park, U of Ala.-Birmingham; Eve McCutchen*, U of Ala.-Birmingham. **ARIZONA:** Joe Kullman, U of Arizona. **ARKANSAS:** Bryan DeBusk*, U of Arkansas. **CALIFORNIA:** Joan Allmaras*, UCSD; Meghan Blake, Calif. Fuel Cell Partnership, W. Sacramento; Joanna Draglch*, UCLA; Raven Hanna, freelance, Folsom; Linda Kim, freelance, Long Beach; Wendy Hughes*, UCSD; Elise Kleeman, Pasadena Star News; Erica Mito*, City of Hope/Bio Sciences; Brittany Moya del Pino, freelance, San Diego; Linda Tway, Sapphire Pacific, San Diego. **COLORADO:** Amanda Haag*, U of Colorado; Boonsri Dickinson*, U of Colorado. **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA:** Christine Dell’Amore, UPI; Thomas Hayden, freelance; Adrienne Kroepsch, *Communications Daily/Satellite Week*; Carol E. Torgan, Revolution Health; Katie Unger, *Science* magazine; Allison Whitney, Lombardi Comprhen. Cancer Ctr./Georgetown U; Akemi Yoshimoto, Kyodo News/Wash. Bureau; Nick Zagorski, Proceedings of the Nat’l Academy of Science. **FLORIDA:** Lindsay H. Levkoff*, U of Florida; Michael P. Underwood*, U of Florida. **GEORGIA:** William H. Light, CDC, Atlanta. **IOWA:** Mike Krapfl, Iowa State U News Service; Thomas R. O’Donnell, freelance, Urbandale; David Pedersen, U of Iowa Health Sciences. **ILLINOIS:** E. Julia Chosy*, U of Ill.-Chicago; Jann Ingmire, JAMA/Archives Media Relations. **INDIANA:** Patricia C. Abab*, Purdue U; James Larson*, U of Notre Dame. **KENTUCKY:** Tamara Walker*, Berea College. **LOUISIANA:** Katie Howell*, Louisiana State U. **MARYLAND:** Diane Bovenkamp, Fnd. for Fighting Blindness, Owings Mills; Anita Bhorjee*, Johns Hopkins U; Rachel Courtland*, UC Santa Cruz; Reginald Rhein, Jr., freelance, Glen Echo. **MASSACHUSETTS:** Lonnie K. Christiansen, freelance, Neburyport; Elizabeth Dougherty, freelance, Northboro; Carla P. Lane, freelance, Brookline; Kipp Lynch, freelance, Lee; Helen Pickersgill, Whitehead Inst. for Biomedical Res.; Jennifer Weeks, freelance, Watertown; Roanne Weisman, freelance, Newton. **MONTANA:** Christine W. Miller*, U of Montana. **MISSOURI:** Kristin Bullok, freelance, St. Louis; Mary Eileen Burke, Academy of Science-St. Louis; Alissa Nelson, Washington U.

continued on page 34

BULLETIN BOARD

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS:

The 2008 Grady-Stack Award
for Interpreting Chemistry
for the Public

For more than 50 years, the American Chemical Society has honored the work of journalists who have increased the public's understanding of chemistry and chemical progress. Nominations are now being accepted for the 2008 James T. Grady-James H. Stack Award for Interpreting Chemistry for the Public. Any person can nominate an individual. All nominees must have made noteworthy presentations through a medium of public communication.

Award Prize: \$3,000, Gold Medallion and Certificate

Deadline: November 1, 2006

The 2008 Grady-Stack Award will be presented at the 236th ACS National Meeting in Philadelphia, PA.

Information about the award can be found at: www.chemistry.org/awards or contact Victor Cornejo at v_cornejo@acs.org



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Research probes enzyme that may lead to SARS drugs*

These are just a few of the breakthroughs that have been achieved so far in 2006 at the world's synchrotron and free-electron laser light-source research facilities. The latest word on these exciting developments (read: story ideas) is at **www.lightsources.org**, the Web site managed and supported by the light-source facilities. Visit our site for the latest news and other resources. Subscribe to our News Flash or RSS services to have information delivered directly to your desktop. We think you'll find that **lightsources.org** is a reliable source of bright ideas.



NEW MEMBERS

Continued from page 33

NEBRASKA: Raychelle Burks*, U of Nebraska-Lincoln. **NEVADA:** Robert Conrad, Nevada Agri. Experiment Station-Reno. **NEW JERSEY:** Carol Feinberg, Vitiello Associates, E. Brunswick; Jennifer S. Griffin*, Princeton U. **NEW YORK:** Deborah Berebichez*, NYU; Sarah Nell Davidson*, Cornell U; Dan Fagin, NYU; Katherine Hobson, *U.S. News & World Report*; Sherry Karabin, freelance, NYC; Amanda Schaffer, freelance, Brooklyn; Nicole Spooner*, Cornell U; Marcia Stone, freelance, NYC; Heather VanEpps, Rockefeller U Press. **TENNESSEE:** Craig M. Hauck*, Vanderbilt U; Michael Linde*, Johns Hopkins U. **TEXAS:** Katherine Kelly Ellins, U-T Institute for Geophysics, Austin; Paula Kothmann*, U-T Austin. **OREGON:** Elizabeth Walter*, U of Oregon. **PENNSYLVANIA:** Katie Compton*, Drexel U; Sandy Field, freelance, Field Scientific; Meghan E. Holohan, freelance, Pittsburgh; Thomas P. Imerito, Science Comm., Pittsburgh; Gloria McVeigh, Rodale, Inc.; Kim Sp[accarotella]* Penn State U; Audra J. Wolfe, Chemical Heritage Foundation. **RHODE ISLAND:** Kristina Davitt*, Brown U. **VIRGINIA:** Judy Mannes, freelance, Vienna; Karen E. Ross, freelance, Alexandria. **WASHINGTON:** Deborah Chang*, U of Washington; Marcia Hill Gossard, freelance, Pullman. **WISCONSIN:** Ashley A. Graboski-Bauer*, U of Wisconsin, Stevens Point. **AUSTRALIA:** Natasha Mitchell, ABC International, New South Wales. **CANADA:** Anne Corriveau, Nat'l Res. Canada Media Relations. **FRANCE:** Michael Schirber, freelance, Saint Priest. **UNITED KINGDOM:** Amber Bauer*, Imperial College of London.

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BULLETIN BOARD

**SOCIETY OF
NEUROSCIENCE
ANNUAL MEETING**

Science journalists are invited to cover the annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience, in Atlanta, Oct. 14-18, 2006. This is the largest and most important meeting of the year on the brain and nervous system. Major topics include the latest research on brain development, nerve growth factors, stem cells, the senses, behavior, attention, learning and memory, language, brain disorders, gene therapy, brain imaging, neurotransmitters and receptors. Public information officers at universities and nonprofit institutions are encouraged to prepare news releases about their neuroscientists' work for placement in the press room. For more

information, please visit www.sfn.org, or call Joe Carey at 202-962-4000.

**AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION MEETING**

The American Anthropological Association invites coverage of its 2006 Annual Meeting, Nov. 15-19 in San Jose, Calif. The meeting will feature new research in archaeology, biological anthropology and evolution, forensics, medical anthropology, and public health, cultural anthropology, and linguistics. For info and press passes, contact Susie Bodman at 703-528-1902 or sbodman@aaanet.org.

**PALE BLUE DOT
WORKSHOP**

The Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum and the NASA Astrobiology Institute invite journalists to attend the third Pale Blue Dot workshop, at the Adler Planetarium in Chicago, Ill., where scientists will discuss ideas and methods for detecting life at the planetary scale beyond Earth. An important emphasis of Pale Blue Dot III is to expand dialogue and facilitate working relationships between scientists and journalists. For more information visit www.adlerplanetarium.org/pale_blue_dot/index.shtml, or e-mail Linda Billings at lbillings@seti.org.

More ads on page 36

**Call for Submissions:
Silence Kills**

For a special issue titled "Silence Kills," the literary journal *Creative Nonfiction* seeks essays investigating the need to break dangerous silences within the healthcare community.

Selected essays will be published in an upcoming issue of *Creative Nonfiction*. One \$1000 and three \$500 cash prizes will be awarded to the best essays submitted.

Deadline: October 2, 2006

For more information and complete guidelines, visit www.creativenonfiction.org

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Lee Gutkind, editor


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The ACS News Service Weekly PressPac provides hot news from 34 peer-reviewed journals published by the American Chemical Society. Each news summary includes links to download a full-text version of the scientific article and contact information for the chief researcher. You'll get long lead times, with stories often for release a week or more before the journal publication date. To join the PressPac e-mail list, contact newsroom@acs.org. The PressPac archive is located at www.chemistry.org/news/presspac.html.

**AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY
NATIONAL MEETING**

Science writers are invited to cover the 232nd National Meeting of the American Chemical Society, in San Francisco, Sept. 10-14, 2006. This promises to be the largest meeting of the year devoted to topics that span the boundaries of science from astronomy to zoolo-

gy. With 2006 the 100th anniversary of the great San Francisco earthquake and fire, ACS has selected a timely multidisciplinary theme—Collaboration in Chemistry: Recovery From and Prevention of National Disasters. However, the more than 10,000 presentations will include reports on dozens of other topics at the cutting edge of science. They include exciting advances in nanomedicine, a symposium on molecular cuisine in which scientists team with chefs, mycotoxins and allergens in food, the nuclear branch of forensic science, new sources of energy, and the promise of nanotechnology. Public information officers are encouraged to prepare news releases for inclusion in the ACS Press Book. For more information, please contact newsroom@acs.org. ■

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More ads on pages 34-35

Submissions to ScienceWriters

To place an ad or classified listing in *ScienceWriters* contact Lynne Friedmann at lfriedmann@nasw.org. ■

**Fall 2006 Newsletter
Submission Deadline**

SEPTEMBER 1, 2006