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The Newsletter of The National Association of

ScienceWriters™

FEATURES

NEWS

COLUMNS

MEMBERS RESPOND TO SURVEY ON ANNUAL MEETING

by Mariette DiChristina

As I like to say, if you ask 10 science writers a question, you'll get 10 different and very thoughtful answers. Nevertheless, a few overarching messages came through clearly from our recent membership survey about the annual meeting. CASW New Horizons Program Director Paul Raeburn and I drafted the survey with the idea of fine-tuning our annual gatherings. Special thanks to Russ Clemings for setting up the automatic electronic survey and to Diane McGurgan, Tinsley Davis, and board members for their help and suggestions for questions.

A total of 223 (of 2,800 NASW members) participated. Thanks, everybody, for your feedback—we would love to hear from more of you!

Looking over the collective responses below, you will see these broad, take-home messages:

- Members feel pressed for time, so the annual meeting has to be as efficient and valuable as possible.
- Members don't have extra money to throw around (in addition to the challenges experienced by freelancers, a number of staff members reported difficulties in getting travel money or time off to attend meetings).
- Members would like us to facilitate ways for them to further benefit from the meeting, such as improving mingling opportunities or making available other services.

Half of the respondents had attended the 2006 or 2007 meeting. They ranked the NASW workshops and networking as top reasons for attending, on average. After that came meeting editors, CASW briefings and lab tours, and the field trips. The chief reason for not coming was the cost of travel, but time and travel distance were also major factors. The respondents were: 58.7 percent freelancers, 19.3 percent staff writers or editors, and 29.6 percent PIOs.

About a third of the attendees came to the banquet; 9.4 percent of those who did not attend cited cost as a factor. The open comments revealed that several others who did not come to the banquet had other commitments or they just wanted a break from socializing. On the other hand, people would also like us to facilitate socializing in other contexts. The verbatim comments, for instance, suggested an editor-writer mixer and developing a Conference 101 session for new attendees

Many respondents (78 percent) would welcome regional workshops. (Of

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SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Fall *Next Issue*	**September 1, 2008**
Winter	**December 1, 2008**
Spring	**March 1, 2009**
Summer	**June 1, 2009**

course, a number of local science-writing groups also provide gatherings and workshops.)

I'm grateful to the respondents for sharing their ideas about how to shape the meeting in the future. One member asked, for instance, that NASW serve as a clearinghouse for people to share lodging and rides. That same creative person suggested a raffle for a free conference in the future (including the hotel at least, and maybe roundtrip airfare) as a way of both fundraising and encouraging future attendance.

On the issue of making the meeting more efficient, we got several ideas. In response to the question about video podcasts, several respondents recommended audio—which they can hear while doing other things, saving time. Others asked that the annual meeting coincide with another science meeting, or that we add workshops or other gatherings (such as receptions) for NASW members to gather during other science meetings. Wrote one: "…de-linking the NASW meeting from the AAAS meeting pretty much killed them both for me. It was worth the time, effort, and expense to get a two-fer, but I can't justify going to either meeting on its own." In contrast, another chided us for the idea: "Do keep in mind there are already receptions and events every single night at AAAS." Another commenter wanted more from NASW itself: "I would prefer to have more than one day of NASW workshops. Especially given the cost and hassle of air travel these days, that would make the meeting more worthwhile to me."

And we received a few requests for concurrent New Horizon sessions, which CASW will be testing at this fall's meeting.

Last, we got some much appreciated suggestions for better self-promotion. For instance, one person told us to post testimonials from people who got jobs by coming to the meetings. Another suggested making available edited video of presentations, TED-conference-style: "If we are serious about science literacy, we need to share the brilliant funny sarcastic discussions from our workshops with others…. The workshops are good and the event is amazing, and more people in more places need access to it." Have more ideas? Send them to director@nasw.org. ■

NASW election goes electronic

In an effort to increase member participation, this year's NASW board election will take place exclusively through electronic balloting. The online "poll" opens in October. Instructions will be sent to you this fall by e-mail.

ANNUAL MEETING SURVEY RESULTS

In late February, NASW members were asked to complete a survey about aspects of the annual meeting. The following are results based on 223 respondents.

1. Did you attend the 2006 annual Science Writers meeting in Baltimore or the 2007 meeting in Spokane?

Yes	49.8%	(111)
No	50.2%	(112)

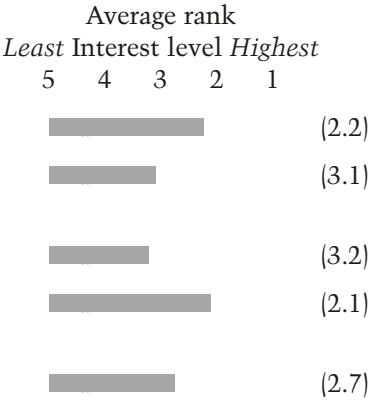
2. Did you attend the NASW workshops?

Yes	48.0%	(107)
No	49.8%	(111)

3. Did you attend one or more days of the CASW New Horizons briefing and lab tours?

Yes	34.5%	(77)
No	63.7%	(142)

4. If you attended the meeting, why? List the value you placed on the following things, 1 being "highest interest" and 5 being "least interest."



5. If you did not attend the 2006 or 2007 meetings, please tell us why not. (Check all that apply.)

Cost of travel	38.1%	(85)
Cost of NASW workshops	5.4%	(12)
Could not spare the time	33.2%	(74)

continued on page 4

Too far to travel to the meetings	20.2%	(45)
Topics of NASW workshops did not interest me	5.4%	(12)
Topics of CASW New Horizons briefing and lab tours program did not interest me	8.1%	(18)
Field trips did not interest me	4.5%	(10)
Conflict with work/other meeting/ family commitment*	3.6%	(9)
Prefer NASW meeting linked to AAAS*	2.8%	(7)
Student, new member, or not a member*	1.6%	(4)
Cost trumped interest*	0.8%	(2)
Other: retired (1), canceled travel due to emergency (1), time of year is bad for travel (1), not linked to scientific conference (1), Spokane didn't offer enough other opportunities (meetings, business) compared to Baltimore (1), not sure what I would do with the content professionally (1)*	2.4%	(6)

6. If you attended the meeting, did you attend the NASW/CASW banquet?

Yes	31.8%	(71)
No	23.3%	(52)

7. If you attended the meeting but did not attend the NASW/CASW banquet, why not?

Cost	9.4%	(21)
Quality of food		(0)
Time commitment/schedule conflict*	3.2%	(8)
Had other plans*	1.6%	(4)
Left meeting early*	0.8%	(2)
Other: I don't remember if I went to the banquet (1), I hate Award banquets—deadly boring (1), I'm kind of a loner (1), I was exhausted (1)*	1.6%	(4)

*write-in responses

8.Which of the following is most important in your decision to attend the annual meeting?

Cost of travel	24.7%	(55)
Cost of meals and lodging	2.7%	(6)
Both	65.0%	(145)

9. If NASW held regional workshops in addition to the national meeting, would you pay to attend those workshops?

Yes	78.0%	(174)
No	15.7%	(35)

10. Please check all that describe your employment:

Staff journalist or editor	19.3%	(43)
Staff PIO or science communicator	29.6%	(66)
Full or part-time educator	8.1%	(18)
Full or part-time student	7.2%	(16)
Full or part-time freelance	58.7%	(131)

11. If you are a full or part-time freelance, please check all that apply to your client list:

Print or electronic news media	55.6%	(124)
Higher education	20.2%	(45)
Government agency	9.4%	(21)
Nonprofit organization	26.0%	(58)
Business and industry	12.6%	(28)
Book author*	2.0%	(5)
Academic press/research journal*	0.8%	(2)
Educational publishing (K-12)*	0.8%	(2)
Medical education*	0.4%	(1)
Scientific society*	0.4%	(1)
Retired*	0.4%	(1)

12. If you are a staff member, does your employer give you time off to come to the annual meeting?

Yes	37.2%	(83)
No	10.3%	(23)

13. If you are a staff member, does your employer pay your way?

Yes	30.0%	(67)
No	15.2%	(34)
Partial	4.5%	(10)

14. If we made video webcasts of the proceedings, would you use them?

Yes	37.7%	(84)
No	16.6%	(37)
Unsure	41.7%	(93)

15. Would you use video webcasts even if they increased the cost of the annual meeting?

Yes	17.0%	(38)
No	28.3%	(63)
Unsure	46.6%	(104)

16. Do you have any other ideas you'd like us to consider to improve your annual meeting?

As someone who covers both psychology and health, I sometimes had trouble finding a topic that relates to my work, so I'd appreciate more inclusion of topics that are less physical-science oriented.

Need more physics and physical science speakers to justify my going to the CASW.

Regional gatherings are a great idea. My government employer supports travel but not to distant states. I could attend more frequently if there were regional events.

By helping writers network (to share lodging) and (to share rides), the organization could go a long way toward almost halving the cost for many. Other organizations do a much better job of this.

Ensure the balance of sessions between reporters, freelance, and PIO interests.

Ensure the balance between sessions aimed at newbies and at silver backs.

I think video webcasts are a great idea. If webcasting is expensive, then even a simple audio recording of the session would be great.

Prefer podcast/mp3 in addition to video, since I could listen while driving or making dinner rather than having to sit a computer when I should be working.

I would consider attending regional workshops if they were held in conjunction with a major science conference such as AAAS, AGU, or Neuroscience.

I would prefer to have more than one day of NASW workshops. Especially given the cost and hassle of air travel these days, that would make the meeting more worthwhile to me.

Keep encouraging members to come up with good workshop ideas. Some of the sessions are great and others are shopworn with the same speakers year after year.

NASW could think about ways to make first-time attendees feel more welcome... (for example) last year, I attended a weekend journalism conference where first-time attendees went to an hour-long "Conference 101" session, a couple of hours before the conference actually started. It was a chance to meet people in a smaller setting.

Advance sign up for "meet the scientist" lunches and longer time to interact with scientists during lab visits.

Some renewed activity at AAAS aside from education projects.

Concurrent sessions for CASW, please! I cannot afford to devote so much time to the briefings when some of them are not of interest to me.

17. In addition to the annual ScienceWriters meeting, NASW is considering other activities. Would you be interested in an NASW gathering during citywide science festivals such as are held in Berkeley, Calif.; Cambridge, Mass.; and, this year for the first time, New York?

Yes	67.7%	(151)
No	29.6%	(66)

18. Would you like NASW to offer workshop sessions or other informal gatherings (such as a reception) during AAAS or other science meetings? (Remember, because we would need to pay for the space, additional workshops also would require a fee.)

Yes	65.0%	(145)
No	27.8%	(62)

■

COMMUNICATION AS A DIALOGUE, NOT A LECTURE

by Rick Borchelt and Kathy Hudson

In 2004 the Genetics and Public Policy Center (GPPC) fielded a survey of more than 4,000 U.S. residents about new genetic technologies, and more than 40 percent said they did not trust scientists "to put society's interest above their personal goals." The roots of this uneasy relationship lie in the reliance that the science and technology community places in various "deficit models" of interaction with the public. The basic assumption behind these models is that there is a linear progression from public education to public understanding to public support, and that this progression—if followed—inevitably cultivates a public wildly enthusiastic about research. But this model of scientific engagement with the public obviously isn't working.

Clearly, something needs to change in the science-public landscape.

Lately, all manner of ways to "involve" the public in science policy and practice have cropped up, mostly around oversight of emerging technologies like synthetic biology, nanotechnology, and human genetics. Scientific associations are developing centers devoted to public engagement in science, funding agencies have created sweeping mandates for collecting public input on research, and research-performing institutions are hosting community meetings and science cafes about their work. But one might wonder—are these new organizations going to truly "engage" the public?

In a nutshell, an erosion of public trust that began as a trickle of doubt about radiation safety and pesticides has grown to program-threatening uprisings against emerging new technologies, from genetically altered "Frankenfoods" to concern over "grey goo" in nanotechnology.

Initially, the "deficit" in question was framed as an "information deficit"—if only lay people knew what scientists did, goes this line of thought, they too would support the agendas of the scientific establishment. Since World War II, the science community has been operating under this information-deficit model, built on one-way flow of information from the expert to the public with very little information flowing back the other way. This model drove communication of science and technology for the last half of the 20th century, despite its very obvious shortcoming: Neither public support for research nor scientific literacy increased significantly in all that time.

More recently, however, the information-deficit model increasingly has been reframed as an "attitudinal deficit"—to know us is to love us, runs the mantra of this public-understanding school of science-society interaction. Having realized the practical futility—if not the ethical challenge—of making every lay person a lay scientist, the public-understanding model contents itself with pursuing public appreciation, emphasizing the benefits of science to society without worrying unduly about how much science the public actually understands. The end goal hasn't changed—increased public support of S&T—even if the methods used to get there and the metrics used to define success are different. The direction of information flow remains the same as well: top-down from the scientist or engineer to the public.

The asymmetric communications practices embodied by both the scientific literacy and public understanding movements cultivate scientists who resist ceding any level of control of the science policy agenda to non-scientists, a view neatly encapsulated by a quote from a series of scientist interviews we conducted at GPPC a few years ago: "I don't think that the general uninformed public should have a say, because I think there's a danger. There tends to be a huge amount of information you need in order to understand. It sounds really paternalistic, but I think this process should not be influenced too much by just the plain general uninformed public."

Simply trying to educate the public about specific science-based issues is not working…

This wariness is reciprocal in the 21st century, as UK-based communications researcher Martin Bauer and his colleagues noted in the journal *Public Understanding of Science* last year: "Mistrust on the part of scientific actors is returned in kind by the public." Negative public attitudes, they say, as revealed in large-scale surveys, are viewed by scientists as proof that "a deficient public is not to be trusted" to provide uncritical support for the scientific enterprise.

Clearly, something needs to change in the science-public landscape. Writing in *Science* in 2003, AAAS Chief Executive Officer Alan Leshner summarized the problem eloquently: "Simply trying to educate the public about specific science-based issues is not working…We need to move beyond what too often has been seen as a paternalistic stance. We need to engage the public in a more open and honest bidirectional dialogue about science and technology."

Rick Borchelt is director of communications and Kathy Hudson is director of the Genetics and Public Policy Center at Johns Hopkins University, which is supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts with research funding from the National Human Genome Research Institute.

Indeed, research-performing institutions increasingly say they have traded in their old, top-down models of science literacy and public understanding for the new buzzwords of "public consultation" and "public engagement." But the philosophy behind consultation and engagement seems, on closer inspection, not to have changed much at all. Many scientists expect consultation and engagement to cultivate a public more supportive of science as planned by, performed by, and promoted by scientists—despite the fact that neither consultation nor engagement have been rigorously evaluated to see if these goals are reasonable or even possible. And even if they turn out to be measurably effective in meeting some articulated goal, are they affordable enough to deploy? Neither consultation nor engagement can be done on the cheap.

What, then, can consultation or engagement do for us? This "participatory turn" in science-society relations, as Harvard scholar Sheila Jasanoff terms it, ostensibly focuses on regular dialogue (two-way, symmetrical communication), transparency of the decision- and policy-making process, and meaningful incorporation of public input into that process. On paper, the goal of these two-way, participatory models is *mutual satisfaction of both* parties, the research enterprise and its publics, with the relationships that exist between them. Key dimensions of this dialogue are negotiation, compromise, and mutual accommodation. It places a premium on long-term relationship building with all of the strategic publics: research participants, certainly, but also media, regulators, community leaders, policymakers, and others. These emerging models offer promise for scientists and the public to engage *each other* more fully and productively—although the promise is as yet only tantalizing, and not yet tempered by much scrutiny from social science research.

The dearth of evaluative research on engagement stems partly from the fact that very little is being done. In practice, much communication currently passed off as public consultation and engagement is still one-way, expert-to-layperson information delivery, albeit in different settings like cafes scientifique, public meetings, and town halls. Research organizations have been quite adept at putting together well-rehearsed, tightly scripted opportunities for "public input"—but with no institutionalized mechanisms for reflecting the public's input in deliberation or policy construction. In fact, one gets the not-so-subtle impression that these engagement events are being held with the hope of staving off public dissatisfaction, or providing just enough semblance of listening to public concerns that the natives don't get so restless they revolt.

In our view, the end game of public engagement should be empowerment: creating a real and meaningful mechanism for public input to be heard far enough upstream in science and technology policy making and program development to influence decisions. It is not about making a decision among a scientific elite, and then staging public events to move the public toward agreeing with that desired outcome. It is about empowering lay citizens to learn all they want about pending program or policy issues (not what scientists believe they need to know to weigh in), and then giving them access to deliberative processes where that knowledge can be questioned, applied, and incorporated with knowledge or questions gleaned from outside the scientific process.

Public engagement is not about getting the policy you want; it's about getting the public input you need to craft sustainable policy that enjoys public confidence.

And it is about agreeing up front to accommodate public input politically, not just to listen and nod politely. Unlike the unidirectional and hierarchal communication that characterizes scientific literacy and public understanding models of science-society relations, public engagement practiced as iterative dialogue *does* result in demonstrable shifts in knowledge and attitudes among participants. At GPPC, we have documented and measured these shifts during town hall and online deliberations. But the shift is not always in the direction scientists might expect or prefer. Public engagement is not about getting the policy you want; it's about getting the public input you need to craft sustainable policy that enjoys public confidence.

Public engagement is also about agreeing up front to accommodate public input personally. Public engagement changes people. The public gains knowledge, shares expertise, and reflects on how much risk society is willing to accept to realize the promise of emerging technologies. Less appreciated, but perhaps even more significant, is the expectation that scientists who enter into public engagement should see their knowledge and attitudes change, too. This is the real mark of successful public engagement: Rather than insisting upon the public's deeper appreciation and understanding of science, its primary goal is scientists' deeper understanding of the publics' preferences and values.

■

"Engaging the Scientific Community With the Public," Science Progress *(**www.scienceprogress.org**), April 21, 2008.*

NASW BOARD ELECTION CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Election of the 2009-10 NASW board takes place this year with online voting in October. In addition to four officers, the board consists of 11 members at large. The nominating committee has assembled and outstanding slate of candidates.

Officer Candidates:

***President*—**
Mariette DiChristina (*Scientific American*)

Considering the heady responsibility ahead of steering the National Association of Science Writers as its president during a time marked by rapid change in the publishing industry, I realize that our next steps together are critical. As president, I need your good ideas—in fact, I'm counting on them—to help our thoughtful and energetic colleagues on the board to improve the organization for all of us. I will be working to make our board activities as transparent as possible—and I encourage your participation; the organization is nothing without its volunteers.

As for my past service: As vice president, I have chaired the workshops committee for the annual meeting for the past two years. From 2005 through 2007, I was Internet committee co-chair, helping to oversee NASW's website redesign, from hiring the designer to proofreading pages. In 2005, as secretary, I initiated the electronic board communiqué, to provide regular updates about board activities.

From 1997 to 2005, I co-chaired the education committee and its mentoring program, matching more than 250 aspiring science writers with mentors. I helped develop several education committee projects, including website informational resources for beginning science writers (in 2001) and for science educators (in 2004), as well as the internship fair held at the AAAS annual meeting. For these efforts, I was co-recipient of the 2004 Diane McGurgan Service Award.

From May 2001 through May 2004, I chaired Science Writers in New York. Currently the executive editor of both *Scientific American* and *Scientific American Mind* and an adjunct associate professor in the graduate science, health and environmental reporting program at New York University, I have been a journalist for more than 20 years.

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

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, 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. And I served as an assistant managing editor for *U.S. News*, directing the magazine's science coverage. I'm now blogging and helping to produce multimedia reports for the *U.S. News* website.

In the next two years, I'd like to work to expand NASW programs geared toward helping members thrive in a turbulent media world. I also hope to continue our mandate to improve the quality of science writing worldwide.

***Treasurer*—**
Peggy Girshman (*Congressional Quarterly*)

As the executive editor of consumer publishing, I oversee a website on politics and government (especially Congressional) policy. Some of our stories cover environment, technology, health care, and science policy.

It is the first time in my 32-year career that I haven't been in broadcasting. Prior to this, I was a managing editor at NPR News. I coordinated the radio newsroom expansion into multimedia for npr.org, I helped initiate the year-long "Climate Connections" series and, among other tasks, I oversaw the science desk.

Among other jobs in my eclectic career: stints as medical/science producer for the CBS-TV affiliate in Washington, D.C., deputy senior science editor at NPR, 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 1990s, 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 NASW secretary. I have judged the Ev Clark, AAAS, Keck Communication, and NASW Science-in-Society awards.

***Secretary*—**
Ron Winslow (*Wall Street Journal*)

I've been a reporter and editor at the *Wall Street Journal* for 25 years, the last 18 covering health and medicine. I joined NASW in 1990 and was struck by the sense of community and the opportunity to learn about science at the CASW New Horizons seminars.

During the 1990s, when my beat focused on health policy, I was invited to be a founding board member of the Association of Health Care Journalists. I readily agreed, having experienced the value of such an organization at NASW. I served eight years on the AHCJ

board and edited the organization's quarterly newsletter.

My beat is now focused on medical science. It is also a tumultuous time for science writing, with news happening at an explosive pace while traditional media downsize or eliminate coverage. I'm running for the board because I want to be more involved with NASW and to work with colleagues to address the challenges confronting our profession and the people who rely on us to help them navigate the world of science.

Member-at-Large Candidates (11 seats available):

Beryl Lieff Benderly (Freelance)

In 2002, through my efforts, NASW joined Authors Coalition of America, which has reliably provided NASW more than $50,000 annually. Coalition funds pay for a variety of services, including the new Words' Worth market database, national and international travel fellowships, enhanced content for our workshops, newsletter and website, and more. As coalition liaison, I work to maximize this income by representing NASW at regular meetings and serving on the coalition's distribution committee. Within NASW, I serve on the board and the freelance committee and have co-chaired the Science-in-Society Awards. NASW honored my service with the Diane McGurgan Award.

These are very challenging times for science writers, with many newspapers and magazines struggling and new media evolving rapidly. I believe NASW needs to be more vigorous than ever as our source of information, education, advocacy, and support. With seven national writing prizes, eight books, hundreds of articles, and a monthly column on *Science* magazine's website, I want to keep working to make NASW stronger and more useful to all our members.

Kelli Whitlock Burton (Freelance)

During my 13-year membership in NASW, I have seen our organization mature into an invaluable network of science writers who share a common desire to excel in our professions. As co-chair of the education and Internet committees and a two-term board member, I have had the good fortune to work on many of the projects that contributed to NASW's growth, including the organization's wildly popular annual mentoring program and internship fair. After seven years as co-chair of the Education Committee, I took on the role of co-chair of the Internet committee, playing a key role in the redesign of our website.

I continue to work on projects to increase online resources for our members and have many ideas about ways we can make our website even more useful and dynamic. I was a co-recipient of the Diane McGurgan Service Award in 2004 and have been a board member since 2005, a position that has given me new insight into our organization and its relevance in the field. I am particularly interested in increasing our efforts to assist the ever-growing population of freelance science writers, as well as projects to help bring new communicators into our profession.

Over the last 18 years, I have been medical reporter, university PIO, magazine editor and, since 2004, a full-time freelance writer and regular contributor to the *Boston Globe*, *Science*, *Science*NOW!, and many other publications. I have 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.

Glennda Chui (*symmetry* magazine)

After 23 years as a science reporter and editor for the *San Jose Mercury News*, I recently moved to Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC) to become deputy editor of *symmetry*. It's a joint publication of two U.S. Department of Energy laboratories (Fermilab and SLAC), and covers particle physics. I also co-teach a science news writing 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 Paulsen, I co-chair an NASW committee concerned with maintaining free access to the information that's critical to doing our jobs. The committee works closely with the Society of Environmental Journalists, the Association of Health Care Journalists, and a national freedom of information coalition set up under the auspices of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press. I'm keenly interested in the education of the next generation of science journalists, and in the future of journalism in general.

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

I seek re-election to the NASW Board as I hope to continue to serve the diverse membership of our organization. In my year on the board, I have gained new insight and appreciation for our organization and the staff and volunteers who make it work. As I have a special interest in providing opportunities for the next generation of science writers, I will, if re-elected, continue to advocate for NASW's programs of professional development and education. As co-chair of the NASW Internet committee, I am able to help advocate for those increasingly important services for our membership. Finally, one recent observation is a convergence of concern about open and timely access to scientific information. Such information is our lifeblood and, should I

return to the board, I hope to help initiate a discussion of how to effectively address this emerging concern.

I am director of research communications for the University of Wisconsin-Madison. For the past 24 years, I've covered the basic and applied sciences at UW-Madison. I also edit and am the project coordinator for The Why Files, a popular and critically successful site about science and technology published on the web under the auspices of the UW-Madison graduate school. I'm also an active freelance science writer having contributed to such publications as *Astronomy*, *Orion*, the Los Angeles Times Syndicate, the *Milwaukee Journal*, the American Heart Association, the Bulletin of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, and the children's science magazine *Muse*. I'm a recipient of the 2001 Science Journalism Award from AAAS and the Society of Professional Journalists Sigma Delta Chi Award for In-depth Reporting. In 1997, I received a Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Gold Award for helping to develop The Why Files. In 2007, I was elected a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Dan Ferber (Freelance)

If elected to the board, I'll strive to implement effective strategies to help science writers thrive in our rapidly changing business. I'll work to help NASW enhance our excellent member services and professional development programs. And, in keeping with our constitution, I'll advocate for NASW to be a strong voice that promotes accurate communication about science and technology.

I've been an independent science journalist since 1998; I'm a contributing correspondent for *Science*, and I'm a freelance magazine writer. My work has garnered several awards, including an Outstanding Article Award in 2004 from the American Society of Journalists and Authors. A story of mine was anthologized in *Best of Technology Writing 2006*.

As chair or co-chair of the freelance committee from 2004 to 2007, I spearheaded several new initiatives, including Words' Worth, NASW's online database of freelance rates and contracts information. I also co-founded and chaired NASW's grievance committee, which helps members collect overdue fees and resolve other grievances with publishers. These efforts and others earned me the 2007 Diane McGurgan Service Award.

Bob Finn (International Medical News Group)

As a two-term board member my main focus has been NASW's Science-in-Society Awards. Each year I've worked hard to assemble a stellar list of judges and have shepherded several hundred entries through the process. At present, I'm leading an effort to re-examine the S-I-S awards. Do our current categories make sense? Should there be more, fewer? How should the S-I-S Awards Committee chair be guided in selecting judges free of conflicts of interest? Are the judging criteria clear enough? Is the $2,500 prize adequate? I look forward to a stimulating discussion on these matters, and I hope to be re-elected to the board to implement any changes that are recommended. I also hope to find a way, probably outside the S-I-S structure, to honor outstanding work from NASW members on the public information end of things. As a former PIO (Caltech), freelancer, and current staff journalist, I believe I can represent three of NASW's main constituencies on matters relating to the awards and also to the many other issues requiring board discussion.

Jeff Grabmeier (Ohio State University)

With the decline in science writing positions in the mainstream media, it is more vital than ever to help talented, young writers find ways to succeed in science journalism. That has been my goal since I became co-chair of the education committee in 2004, and will remain one of my main interests if I am elected to the board. As co-chair, I helped develop a travel stipend program that has allowed 10 top science-writing students to attend the AAAS meeting each year with their expenses paid. I have also helped manage the ever-growing mentorship program and internship fair at the AAAS meeting. In addition, I spent five years as editor of the "Our Gang" column in *ScienceWriters*.

In my day job, I am director of research communications at Ohio State University, and write extensively about social science research. I have also done freelance writing for consumer and college magazines and have written chapters for several books, including *Soul of the Sky*. I started my career as a newspaper reporter.

Robin Marantz Henig (Freelance)

Maybe it's because I'm a full-time freelance that my work on the NASW board for the past 10 years has been so satisfying—it's the only way I have colleagues anymore! Along with Dan Ferber and Ellen Ruppel Shell, I'm a founding member of the NASW grievance committee, in which we deal with members' problems with editors or publishers and generally manage to help them get the payment they deserve. It's a wonderful new member service for an evolving organization. I'm also trying to help usher NASW into the 21st century by exploring how science can be communicating in ways that go beyond the ordinary print-based or broadcast-based venues. The most fun I've had in this regard has been in creating the NASW science cabaret, now a regular event at the annual meeting featuring performers who use science as the basis for their music, theater, and stand-up comedy.

I spend most of my time these days writing articles for the *New York Times Magazine*, where I'm a contributing writer. I've written eight books, most recently *Pandora's Baby*, about the early days of in vitro fertilization, which won an NASW Science in Society Award, and *The Monk in the Garden*, about the early days of genetics. I am also a co-editor, with Deborah Blum and Mary Knudson, of NASW's *A Field Guide for Science Writers*.

Michael Lemonick (Climate Central)

One reason you might consider me for the NASW board is that I've had a fair amount of experience in a number of different aspects of science writing over my 25-year career. I've been a staff writer and editor at magazines (senior science writer at *TIME* magazine for 21 years, with the rest at *Discover* and *Science Digest*), a freelance science writer (mostly for magazines but with occasional newspaper work), the author of four books, and a teacher of science journalism at Princeton Columbia, NYU, Johns Hopkins and the Santa Fe Science Writing Workshop—all of which has forced me to be more thoughtful about what we do than I would otherwise have been.

I left *TIME* in a buyout and worked freelance for the past year before joining Climate Central, in Princeton, N.J., in June. I'm senior writer for this newly formed climate-change think tank and information center.

During my career I've been fortunate to win several science-writing awards along the way (the AAAS and AIP are probably the best known, although I've also been honored by the Dog Writers of America and the Overseas Press Club).

Most important, though, as anyone who's followed my frequently curmudgeonly posts on the NASW listservs already knows, I care a great deal about our profession, and would take a lot of pride in helping to promote, improve, and protect it.

Robin Lloyd (Imaginova—LiveScience.com and Space.com)

Blogging, videos, podcasts, business models—there's some anxiety among NASW members when we discuss the web. Based on my experience in online journalism, I am optimistic that NASW members faced with changing economies and new media can evolve and thrive. There is a place for all of us, across all formats. If elected to the NASW board, I will work to enhance integration of web-based journalists and writers and to make digital issues more prominent within NASW and the annual meeting.

I have been a member of NASW for 10 years and am active in Science Writers in New York. I also serve on the university communications council at the Stevens Institute of Technology. I have experience in print journalism (*Pasadena Star-News*), wire journalism (City News Service of Los Angeles), and online journalism (CNN.com, Space.com and LiveScience), as well as time in academia (Ph.D. in sociology) and institutional communications (American Museum of Natural History). I hope to work with board members on an inclusive, proactive, and dynamic approach to meeting our collective future.

Tom Paulson (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*)

I would appreciate continuing to serve on the board for NASW. While attempting to contribute to the cause of bettering communication about science at the national (and international) level, I am also among a few folks up here in the upper-left corner trying to foster the same mission through the still relatively new Northwest Science Writers Association. I am convinced that NASW's future is linked to the health and prosperity of these regional affiliates and that we need to do much more to encourage them.

Our local group's members helped initiate and organize the 2007 annual meeting, which included such highlights as a visit to a grizzly bear laboratory and a Saturday dance party no less wild. The meeting was a great success, by all accounts, yet I discovered some in our local group felt somewhat disconnected, somewhat on the outside-looking-in, at the end of the NASW/CASW meeting. I'd like to continue to explore, as a board member, ways to better incorporate the needs of local groups and individual members within the overall NASW mission. Beyond that, I'd like to continue on as a board member because NASW members provide an encouraging and positive antidote to the malaise afflicting those of us working in the so-called mainstream media. This is an amazingly creative and enthusiastic bunch of people. I'd appreciate the opportunity to continue to serve.

Tabitha M. Powledge (Freelance)

Radical changes in markets for science writers dominate our work lives, especially the rise of web-based publications. In the eight years I have been a board member, NASW has become more activist and concerned about professional and business issues like electronic rights and contracts. We have expanded services for our growing freelance membership, making essential electronic communications more reliable and useful, helping resolve grievances and payment problems with clients, and worrying more about the business of science writing. For seven years I wrote about such changes in the *ScienceWriters* column "The Free Lance," and I am also a long-time member of the freelance and Internet committees.

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 paper publications that include *Scientific American*, *Popular Science*, *Health* magazine, PLoS Biology, *The Scientist*, *Washington Post*, *BioScience*, and *The Lancet*. My book *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Microbiology* came out in 2007, and I am working far too slowly on a second edition of my 1994 book *Your Brain: How You Got It and How It Works*. I do freelance editing too. Like many freelances, I write increasingly for web publications that have included SciAm, The Scientist, Salon.com, and the late HMS Beagle/BioMedNet.com. I'm a regular contributor to the technology blog Popgadget.net.

Adam Rogers (*Wired*)

Every important story today is a science story. If we're doing our jobs, we provide more than just translations of journal articles. Our work gives context and inside stories and looks behind the scenes. It's an important public role—never have science and technology been more at the center of culture.

NASW should continue to be a force for shaping that coverage. If elected, I'd want to find ways to help new science reporters cover their fields maturely—resources, techniques, and places for a broad swath of science, tech, and medicine journalists to talk shop. And no less importantly, I'll try to figure out how to connect those writers with editors who want to pay them.

I've been an on-again, off-again NASW member, but working as an assigning editor for a few years has taught me that writers need the support of this organization. That's why I'm ramping up my involvement.

I covered science, technology, and medicine for *Newsweek* from 1993 to 2002, was a Knight Science Journalism Fellow, and in 2003 became an editor at *Wired*.

Vikki Valentine (National Public Radio)

NPR, like many media companies, is tearing up its journalism blueprint to adapt to the new demands of its audience. As a multimedia producer with experience in Internet, broadcast and print journalism, I'm at the forefront of NPR's effort to reconfigure its newsroom for the 21st century.

I don't think backpack journalism is the overall solution to the current media crisis. When one journalist does everything—audio, video, print—what you often get is a rambling, poorly produced mess. But I do believe journalists need to have subspecialties to compete in the increasingly digital market. If elected to the board, my goal would be to help NASW members figure out how to smartly and efficiently develop subspecialties for the digital age.

I have been a member of NASW since 2000, when I first entered the field of science writing as an editor for Discovery.com News. Since 2001, I have worked as a fulltime web and radio producer for NPR, with freelance writing and video stints for American Public Media's "Marketplace Radio," *New York Times*, Smithsonian Channel, and *National Geographic*'s "Wild Chronicles."

M. Mitchell Waldrop (*Nature*)

I am running for the NASW board for two reasons. First, I can represent the interests of virtually every member in the organization from first-hand experience. In my 30-plus years as a science writer I have been a reporter facing weekly deadlines (*Chemical & Engineering News* and *Science*), a freelance magazine journalist (*Scientific American*, *Technology Review*, and elsewhere), a book author (*Man-Made Minds*, *Complexity*, and *The Dream Machine*), a public-affairs officer (at the National Science Foundation), a blogger, an editor (at *Nature*), and even a purveyor of editorial opinion (also at *Nature*.)

Second, as we all live through journalism's tumultuous transition to the web era, I think NASW needs to take the lead in providing its members with information, training, discussion forums, and mechanisms for sharing best practices. No one can claim to be an expert in this subject; it's changing too fast. However, I can claim to be actively involved in this area. Some of you may have seen my article on "Science 2.0" in the May 2008 *Scientific American*: it was conducted as an experiment in Web 2.0-style "networked journalism," meaning that feedback from users helped to shape the final product. I also have the good fortune to work for Nature Publishing Group, which has been among the most innovative publishers out there at finding new ways to take advantage of the web. I hope to use that experience and those contacts to NASW's advantage. ■

GRAD STUDENTS CREATE POPULAR OUTREACH PROGAM

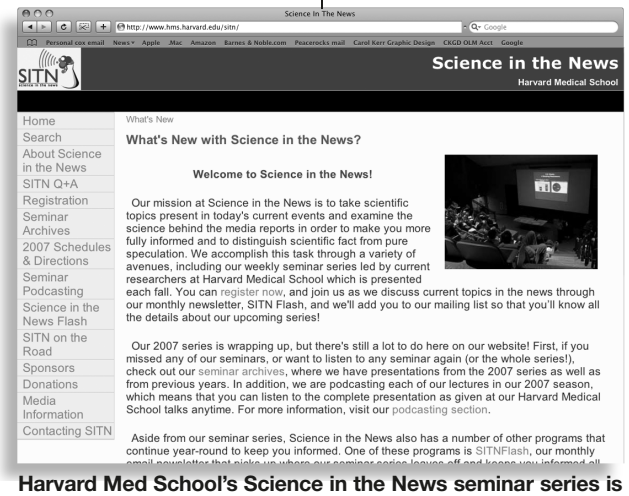
by Amy Vashlishan

What my grandmother knows about genetics she learned from television talk shows. She once cornered me at a family gathering to say she understood all about my work and how we scientists use "that DNA." It took a lengthy conversation to convince her that I hadn't ded-

Amy Vashlishan, Ph.D., recently completed a graduate program in biological and biomedical sciences at Harvard Medical School. From 2004 to 2007, she was co-director of the "Science in the News" series.

icated my academic career to revealing unsuspecting "babydaddies" and additional discussions after to convey how DNA really works. But, these have been rewarding exchanges. I know that my grandmother isn't alone in her misunderstandings about science or dependence on unreliable information sources.

Many scientists have encountered similar frustrations: their inability to explain research to nonscientists or encountering science illiteracy when they try. Motivated by a desire to describe her work to family members, Harvard Medical School graduate student Liz (Hick) Bromley founded "Science in the News" (SITN). In 2000, she and other graduate students in the school's Biological and Biomedical Sciences program began offering this free public seminar series to explain and promote discussion of current, high-profile science news stories. Eight years later, SITN is firmly established as a resource for demystifying the science that captures public attention but for which many lack the background to accurately interpret and evaluate.



Harvard Med School's Science in the News seminar series is enhanced by extensive web resources.

Held weekly, SITN features two-hour lectures on topics in medical science, technology, and the environment. Among subjects tackled have been stem cells, cancer, obesity and diabetes, genetically modified foods, the human genome project, avian flu, heart disease, and the aging brain. This past fall, the series covered global warming, autism, allergies, contagious cancer, and nanotechnology.

Offered in a casual and accessible format, each lecture consists of three segments: an introductory science overview, an explanation of recent research or innovation, and a discussion of the social, ethical, or epidemiological issues related to the topic.

The evening's goal of informality is shaped by a constant stream of audience questions and comments. The program's goal to empower audience members to better understand (and act upon) the science they encounter in their daily lives—i.e., in the grocery store, the doctor's office, the voting booth—is attempted by providing them with new tools to evaluate information they encounter in mainstream media. Feedback is solicited through brief surveys to measure how well audience members self-report our success in meeting this goal.

The surveys also reveal that the audience represents a wide distribution of neighborhoods, socioeconomic backgrounds, and age. Attendees include teachers, students, retirees, writers, engineers, politicians, lawyers, businesspeople, and stay-at-home parents.

Each lecture, at the Harvard Medical School quadrangle, is attended by 40 to 80 people who learned about the series through advertisements in subway trains, stations, and buses in the greater Boston area. SITN also takes advantage of free calendar listings in the Boston Globe weekly science section, distributes fliers to local community centers and libraries, places ads in community and commuter newspapers, and sends postcard calendars to previous attendees. The majority of SITN's modest $6,500 annual budget is spent on advertising.

Funding is primarily from the Harvard Medical School Office of Public Affairs and the Office of Diversity and Community Partnership, with additional grant support from the Harvard Coop and the Biomedical Graduate Student Organization. What began as a grass-roots effort has grown and strengthened through community involvement with much of the operational support coming from local businesses (web support from Bakalarski and Hollinger Media Services) and donated or discounted refreshments (Whole Foods Market, Au Bon Pain, Brugger's Bagels, and Domino's Pizza).

What my grandmother knows about genetics she learned from television talk shows.

In 2004, the program expanded with an offshoot series entitled "Science in the News On the Road." These lectures (some delivered in Spanish) took place at community centers in neighborhoods around Boston. The effort not only reached people unable to attend the on-campus lectures, but also greatly increased the program's audience diversity. Its success led to permanent status with a parallel series of the campus lectures delivered in a local community center the past three years.

Because teachers have such an important role in public science literacy, there has been focused outreach and relationship building with educators. This includes workshops at education conferences, professional development credits for attending the SITN series, and class-

room materials based on the public lectures. This year, a new component of education outreach is bringing a subset of seminars to local high school classrooms and parent-teacher association meetings.

In addition to the local community, SITN has gone global, producing a monthly electronic SITNflash newsletter (approximately 750 subscribers) that describes a recent research finding or medical advance in a short, nontechnical article. Further outreach is through the website **www.SITNboston.org** that includes a "Q and A" feature through which the public posts questions on biological science topics and a team of graduate students utilizes the resources of Harvard Medical School to come up with clear and informed answers. This past year web posting of SITN audio podcasts and lecture slides became added offerings for a geographically unrestricted audience.

…a resource for demystifying the science that captures public attention…

Increase graduate student staffing has kept pace with program expansion. What began as a small cluster of friends has expanded to more than 40 students from programs across the division of medical sciences (including neuroscience, virology, and immunology) and students in chemistry, physics, and evolutionary biology on Harvard's Cambridge campus. Students choose the topics, create and deliver the lectures, coordinate the outreach series or individual lecture teams, develop web resources, write grants, administer the Q and A site, produce and edit the newsletter, design promotional materials, and manage operational details of hosting the series.

Finding student volunteers has been surprisingly straightforward. Those involved with "Science in the News" are motivated by the belief that scientists have a responsibility to act as communicators and provide the public with information to understand the science that affects them. This responsibility is also its reward. By working to accurately and accessibly discuss science in our fields, we become better scientists when forced to pause and consider the foundations of our research, the logic of experiments in our fields, and the impact of our work.

At weekly practice sessions lectures are tried out on peers, painstakingly sifting through jargon and assessing the clarity of analogies. Our motto when a lecturer needs to simplify and focus on the target audience is: "Pretend you are explaining this to your grandmother." ■

THE SIMPLIFICATION OF SCHOOL SCIENCE FAIRS

by Peter Calamai

There never were any vinegar-and-baking-soda volcanoes at science fairs, at least not once you got past the individual schools to the citywide and regional levels. Those volcanoes were merely a canard perpetuated by TV sitcoms and a few journalists who wouldn't know an acid from a base.

But there were aquaria brimming with swimming denizens, hamsters spinning wheels, Petri dishes harboring fungi and molds, electrical gizmos that generated satisfying sparks, plus liquids that foamed and changed color when poured.

Alas, gone, all gone. Four and a half decades has transformed science fairs in ways both distressing and invigorating to an exhibitor whose first-hand experience dates from the early 1960s.

No longer is a science fair a showplace for bright youngsters to demonstrate actual experiments. Instead, judging from hours spent walking the aisles at this year's Canada-Wide Science Fair, in Ottawa, today's participants are largely reduced to screening laptop videos of those experiments.

Organizers say they've had little choice but to strip away most of the fun from exhibiting at science fairs because of concerns over legal liability, animal rights, allergic reactions, fire regulations, litigious parents, and the Nanny-State attitude in North American society that has reduced chemistry sets to a box of innocuous substances.

Four and a half decades has transformed science fairs in ways both distressing and invigorating to an exhibitor whose first-hand experience dates from the early 1960s.

The danger is that such preoccupations might also have robbed science-fair projects of their hallmark zest and their penchant for venturing into the unknown.

I am relieved to report that this is not the case. The gymnasium floor at the University of Ottawa overflowed with hundreds of personable teens, whose inquiring minds are actively involved in real-life matters affecting their family, their peer group, their com-

Peter Calamai is a science reporter for The Toronto Star.

munity, and the world at large. Here are a few inspiring examples:

• When his grandmother had trouble getting around because of the ravages of cancer, Gary Kurek of Bonneville, Alta., began thinking and tinkering. The result, after two years, is a sturdy hybrid between an electric wheelchair and a wheeled walker. This $500 bargain combo allows users to walk when they have the energy—avoiding the unhealthy side effects of compulsory sitting—but also ride when needed. Now in Grade 10, the 16-year-old Kurek is pursuing further development of the Rollator Wheelchair with help from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology.

• Jessica Ngai, a 16-year-old Grade 11 student at Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute, in the Don Mills area, is fascinated with wind energy and bent on studying environmental engineering at the University of Waterloo. She's now also a dab hand with a drill press, thanks to guidance from her mechanical engineer father. Ngai needed to accurately drill holes in a steel cylinder to custom-make a wind turbine that tested blades that close when backing into the prevailing breezes during a rotation and open when being pushed. The flapping blades improved efficiency, and Ngai is continuing her research.

• Caitlin Tolley wants to "revolutionize aboriginal housing" by publicizing the findings from her simple but elegant test of the effectiveness of types of home insulation. Using nothing more complicated than a utility knife, a digital thermometer and a deep freeze, the 17-year-old Algonquin from Maniwaki, Que., showed that two-inch Styrofoam panels hold in heat far longer than the more expensive R20 fiberglass batting.

• To investigate the link between stress and nicotine, Matt Kirby, 14, took advantage of the analytical resources at the University of Guelph lab of his father, a professor of biomedical science. The Grade 8 student nailed down one metabolic pathway involving the hormone cortisol that explains why people crave a smoke when they're under pressure. The highly sophisticated work, using mouse-cell cultures and polymerase chain reaction (PCR), will probably see light in a peer-reviewed academic journal.

Hot or not

In a sign of changing times, the once-robust section for computing and information technology was a rump among the seven categories at the 47th Canada-Wide Science Fair, held May 10-18 in Ottawa under the auspices of the Youth Science Foundation. Burgeoning instead were health sciences, engineering, and earth and environmental sciences. More than 450 judges rated exhibits from nearly 500 students in junior (Grades 7-8), intermediate (Grades 9-10) and senior (Grades 11-12) groupings.

—Peter Calamai

• The gold has left Kirkland Lake, but millions of tonnes of tailings from the mines haven't. Grade 9 students Karlee LaBerge and Lauren Murdoch set out to find a use for this dubious legacy, sparked by a U.S. report of mine waste being used for ceramics.

• Deciding that ceramics raised too many production questions, they focused on making pavers and stepping stones. The two 15-year-olds went through a trial-and-error process that led to a suitable recipe: one part tailings, one part coarse sand, and two parts Portland cement. The air-cured result was certified by the concrete testing lab at Northern College.

There were dozens more projects attesting to the curiosity and ingenuity of today's teens: a self-leveling falcon kite from Kelsey Mostertman, 13, of Abbotsford B.C., to scare away starlings that devour blueberry crops; a low-tech, one-person Zamboni for outdoor rinks, conceived and constructed by Mike Gorda, 13, of North Bay; comprehensive experiments by Quinte Grade 7 student Corey Morrison demonstrating that orange-colored pucks would substantially increase saves by goalies.

The Canada-Wide Science Fair provided welcome testimony to the true spirit of scientific inquiry and a poignant reminder of how far some science has strayed from it. Much of adult research today involves massive teams instead of inspired individuals, the "salami science" of publishing the smallest slice possible to maximize citations and even instances of the misappropriation of public funds with federal granting agencies hiding the identity of the wrongdoers.

Teenage science has also traveled light years since my fairs in 1960 and 1961. My examination as a 16-year-

old of the internal structure of gastropods (the snail family) looks lame in comparison to the profound questions being tackled now by 13-year-olds.

For the fair the following year, I and two fellow Grade 13 students passed high-voltage current through ordinary table salt inside a refractory brick furnace to separate the constituent elements of chlorine and sodium, one poisonous and the other explosive. It's a safe bet that no high school would allow its students to do anything similar today. Today's science-fair organizers blanched at the mere description. Yet no harm ensued and the others wound up as an orthodontist and a rubber chemist. It could be unwise to banish all edgy research from science fair projects. ■

"The evolution of teen science," The Toronto Star (TheStar.com), May 18, 2008. Reprinted with permission.

MAKE TAX PLANNING A YEAR-ROUND JOB

by Julian Block

Quick: What is the biggest single item in your monthly budget? If you're like most people, your spontaneous answer is probably housing costs. But the truth is that the actual culprit is far more likely to be taxes. So says the Tax Foundation, a Washington-based outfit that keeps tabs on how much of your income is siphoned off by federal, state, and local governments. The latest available figures reveal that the average American spends more than twice as much for government as for food.

That disheartening statistic underscores just how costly a mistake it is to think of federal income taxes as simply a once-a-year affliction caused by the need to grapple with Form 1040. Instead, what you ought to do is crank taxes into your financial planning throughout the year. You might be pleasantly surprised to discover the scores of tax-saving opportunities that most individuals overlook each year. The savings can add up to thousands of dollars.

The first step for effective tax planning is to organize that ever-growing accumulation of records in your desk drawers, closets, and other storage spaces. Also, if you have been remiss, resolve now to reconstruct missing or incomplete records before they become hazy in your mind.

Haphazard records can cause you to needlessly lose money to taxes. The better the records you keep, the easier it is to search for opportunities, which is what tax planning is all about.

When it comes to sorting through financial papers, my advice to freelance writers and other clients is to err on the side of caution in deciding which ones to save and which to toss out. To make the chore manageable—and to reduce the likelihood of mistakes—limit yourself to a single category of records at each sitting. For example, tackle all records dealing with freelancing one evening, investments another, insurance another, and so on. Incidentally, this do-it-yourself undertaking provides valuable side benefits: less-cluttered storage spaces and a clearer picture of your financial affairs.

As part of the organizing task, treat yourself to a nice notebook or computer software program. That will make it easier to stick to your resolution and continue to keep careful and complete records throughout the year. Good recordkeeping is the key to mapping out strategies that you can employ year after year to sidestep, decrease or postpone the federal indenture—for instance, timing to your best advantage, where possible, what you receive as income from publishers and your payments of business-related expenses and other kinds of deductible expenditures.

…what you ought to do is crank taxes into your financial planning throughout the year.

Each month, set aside the time to bring your records up to date. A good time to do that is when you are reconciling your checkbooks and bank statements. Go through that accumulation of checks, receipts, and whatever else might help you to uncover all your deductions and to determine the correct amounts of income items, such as advances, royalties and other payments received from publishers, and gains or losses on investments.

Your recordkeeping system should be well organized, but need not be elaborate. You might well be able to make do with those lined sheets that accountants use on which you enter column headings that reflect your particular tax-deductible spending and income sources. Under the appropriate worksheet column heading, enter the details for each item. They could include the check number, date, payee, and other information that you think might be helpful later. ■

*Julian Block, an attorney in Larchmont, N.Y., has been cited as "an accomplished writer on taxes" (*Wall Street Journal*). His books include* Tax Tips For Writers, Photographers, Artists, *available at* ***www.julianblocktaxexpert.com****.*

RECHARGE BATTERIES WITH A JOURNALISM FELLOWSHIP...OR TWO

by Kurt Loft

The invitation arrives as an e-mail and I almost delete it. But when Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution appears in the subject line—a name that carries some weight—I open it.

Good move. It's an invitation to apply for an ocean-science journalism fellowship, a week of mingling with marine scientists, field trips, lab visits, lectures, and plenty of beer and banter among participating scribblers. I apply, and win a coveted slot with nine others from the United States and Europe. It's something of a landmark, being my 10th—and most memorable—journalism fellowship.

Ten? Somebody asks if I have a spouse working the inside angles, or if I'm just a career fellowship nerd. Let me say this to the ambitious science reporter: Apply for a ride on as many legitimate science programs as you can, because the experience will enhance what you know, how you think, and the way you cover your beat.

That experience can be a refreshing change from the newsroom culture—or what's left of it these days. Many of us spend too much time at the office, often cringing at budget lines fashioned by editors who have seen too many movies ("Let's do something on the science of 'Harry Potter!'").

Fellows from last year's ocean science journalism fellowship at WHOI. Kurt Loft is in the second row (far left) wearing a cap.

Sadly, most newspapers and magazines have only one science reporter on staff, compared to 30 or more people in sports. While a half dozen reporters and photographers cover a football game, the lone science stiff chases space shuttles, interviews paleontologists without tripping over a rock, covers trends in epidemiology, homes in on stem-cell debates, explains the dynamics of black holes, writes about a new heart-transplant technique, summarizes the pros and cons of iron fertilization of the oceans, and tries to present a balanced view of global warming with an assured and credible hand.

The task is daunting, so we need all the help we can get. Science fellowships are intended to do just that, often through total immersion in one topic.

Solid programs, such as those offered by the John S. Knight Endowment, temporarily release us from the bond of routine and reward us with the freedom of field work and face time with arcane and engaging people. At their best, fellowships are invitations to explore.

Sure, some spin agendas (NASA is masterful at promoting its cause). But so is Woods Hole, the California Institute of Technology, Boston College, University of Colorado at Boulder, and the Centers for Disease Control. Yet, I came away from all these institutions, and others, with a suitcase of worn legal pads and a better perception of how scientists and engineers do their jobs. I gained a new appreciation of my own job, too.

…the experience will enhance what you know, how you think, and the way you cover your beat.

In Boulder, one cold December, I met and dined with the men and women who are the brains behind the Mars rovers. At Caltech, the science faculty held a mock press conference riddled with scientific inaccuracies, and gave us three hours to ask questions, do research, and write before joining a roundtable discussion on our reports. The scientists learned more from us then we did from them. And at the CDC, in Atlanta, leading epidemiologists showed us how to sleuth for the origin of a possible health epidemic by following the trail of infected strawberries from a banquet hall in Chicago back to a polluted farm in Mexico.

It's all fascinating stuff, and I would encourage anyone who hasn't jumped into the fellowship pool to give it a try. The heads of news organizations should understand the value of these programs and how readers can benefit from a reporter's continued education and enlightenment.

They also should know that fellowships pay for travel, hotel, and most meals, and how the organizing committees look beyond the big media outlets by seeking a balanced geographic and ethnic cross section of people. Anyone who takes the time to apply is a candidate—whether it's your first fellowship or your 10th. ■

Kurt Loft is the science writer for The Tampa Tribune. *He can be reached at kurtloft@tampabay.rr.com.*

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

by Robert Lee Hotz

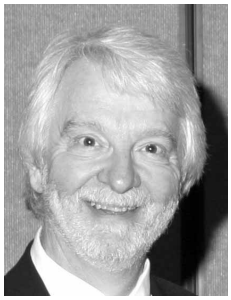


PHOTO COURTESY OF SIGMA XI

Question: What is the one thing that matters most to our future as an organization?

Answer: Volunteering.

From 12 science writers in 1934 NASW today has grown to more than 2,800 professionals, through the generosity, creativity, and energy of generations of volunteers. When I joined NASW a quarter of a century ago, I sought to become part of a professional community that was larger than my own self-interest. By volunteering, I discovered so much of what is worthy in us all.

Here's what you volunteers have done for yourselves—and for all of us.

In recent years, thanks to the gift of volunteer time and energy, you've made it easier to fight for your contract rights in assignment disputes with editors through the creation of a grievance committee staffed by volunteers.

You have made it easier for yourself to find the true market value of your work through the creation—by the volunteers of the freelance committee—of an assignment rates database called Words' Worth that is unique in the science writing world.

To broaden your professional horizons, you've organized an annual meeting of workshops aimed at polishing your skills, organized, and staffed by dozens of volunteers every year. Those of you who share your skills there also volunteer your time and expertise.

Moreover, you've also ensured the future of your craft by mentoring undergraduate and graduate science writing students under the auspices of the volunteers of our education committee.

You've reached out to encourage minority journalists to follow our craft.

As if that weren't enough, you are fostering an international community of craft through your volunteer partnership with the Arab Science Writers Association and the World Federation of Science Journalists, who look to you for seasoned wisdom.

And how do you keep track of all this? You depend on *ScienceWriters*, in which volunteers have for decades chronicled your professional trends and accomplishments.

You also rely on the collective professional conversations conducted on the NASW listservs, in which you all volunteer your experience to the benefit of others. In countless ways, you bring out the best in each other every day.

Certainly, I mean in no way to short-change the contribution of our dedicated, tirelessly good-humored staff, many of whom began as volunteers tending organizational chores that eventually grew beyond any volunteer's ability to handle.

So, considering how much we rely on one another, why do we make it so hard to volunteer? When one of you would like to volunteer for NASW, it's hard to know just where to start, whom to call, what to do, or where to take a new idea.

No more! From now on, any of us who have the time and energy to further our craft and professional interests need only push the "volunteer" button located on the front page of the NASW website. One click will take you to a new web page of volunteer resources organized by long-time board member Glennda Chui who has—of course—volunteered to marshal all that information in one place.

So, now, if you'd like to help, it's as easy as a single mouse click. The result will be more rewarding than you can know—until you push that button. ■

Robert Lee Hotz can be reached at leehotz@earthlink.net.

DISPATCHES FROM THE DIRECTOR

by Tinsley Davis

Dues dribble

The January 2008 dues deadline came and went, yet I was still shocked that as late as mid-May more than 500 members remained in arrears. I truly don't enjoy sending impersonal automatic e-mails nagging members to pay any more than you like receiving them. The NASW budget and operations rely on the cash flow from dues within Q1. In an effort to stem the annual dribble of dues, a late fee will be instituted for the coming year. Effective with the 2009 renewals, any payments received after the dues deadline of January 31 will automatically be assessed a $20 late fee. Ample deadline reminders will be sent, but you can also help by marking your calendars now.

Membership database v2.0

This month, look for your copy of the 2008 membership directory in the mail. A special thanks to Larry Krumenaker for wrestling the material into printable form once again this year. But if your info is incorrect, don't blame Larry. The online membership database has

Tinsley Davis can be reached at director@nasw.org.

been in operation for a year now, enabling members to update their info 24/7. This summer, our indefatigable cybrarian Russ Clemings and I will add features to the database to allow for online renewals and more functionality (such as verifying your dues are current).

Palo Alto or bust

ScienceWriters 2008 is scheduled for Oct. 24-28, in Palo Alto, Calif. Together with the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing's New Horizons in Science briefings, this is the only set of meetings for science writers organized by science writers. If that isn't exciting enough, we've negotiated a $159 room rate. Those of you who live or have traveled to the Bay Area will recognize this as quite a bargain! More information on the meeting can be found on page 23.

Honoring Diane

Speaking of the fall meeting in Palo Alto, be sure to join us for a special luncheon honoring Diane McGurgan, on October 25. We're using the occasion of this year's annual meeting to honor the heart and soul of NASW as she approaches retirement (Diane will maintain her role as senior executive consultant to NASW until June 2009). Don't miss this opportunity to offer her a hug, a handshake, or for a last chance at some good-natured ribbing. ■

CYBERBEAT

by Russell Clemings

Several hundred NASW members got a surprise in their e-mail inboxes in the wee hours of May 15.

For the first time, automation took care of the process of revoking NASW member website access, e-mail aliases, NASW-jobs subscriptions, and other online services from members whose dues were in arrears.

In the past, that has proved easier said than done. Our old database system required us to handle revocations one at a time. As a result, the process stretched well into summer.

The new member database came online last July and this is the first time it was used for membership renewals and revocations. As usual, every member was mailed a dues notice late last year. On March 3, e-mailed warnings were sent to all those who had not yet paid. Then on May 15, we pulled the plug on any stragglers.

The new database handles most of the details automatically. All that NASW'S staff has to do is renew the lists of members in arrears before telling the system to send out the notices. Once that list is approved, the system suspends web access and e-mail aliases, and generates a list of addresses to be removed from NASW-announce and NASW-jobs.

This efficiency came as a slight shock to a handful of members who had to scramble and pay dues quickly to have their services restored. The offsetting good news, however, is that restoration is largely automated as well. Once payment is received, and the member's database record is marked as paid, all services are automatically restored, usually within an hour.

Like any new procedure, this one's first run revealed a few flaws. For example, the May 15 notice told members they could pay their dues by going to a password-protected web page. Oops. If your password has been revoked, you can't go to that page. We'll rewrite that message for next year's round.

In the meantime, you should make sure that your NASW membership record has your current e-mail address listed. That way, you'll be sure to receive any warning notices about dues being in arrears or web services in danger of revocation.

Just go to the NASW member web page (**www.nasw.org/members.htm**) and login, then use the "update your data" link to check your membership record. The "primary e-mail address" is the one we will use to send the dues notices, along with NASW-announce posts and other official communications.

While you're on that page, check the rest of your information to make sure it's up to date and free from typos. The information you see is what's used for *ScienceWriters* and other NASW mailings, and it's published verbatim in the annual membership roster, so it's important that it be as accurate as possible.

Can't remember your password? Just go to **www.nasw.org/forgot.php** for a reminder.

NASW_freelance

Only on a list populated by procrastinating freelancers could a thread begin with a complaint about obsolete file formats and end with exploding potatoes.

In mid-May, New York City freelancer and science blogger Blair Bolles bemoaned a lack of suitable software for opening some photo files that he had archived a decade ago in what he think would be a lasting format: "Isn't it amazing that Kodak can take a hundred dollars from a customer and 10 years later make the purchase obsolete!?"

His question brought sympathy and some suggestions for solving the problem. It also prompted a discussion

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.*

of other file formats that are either extinct or endangered, including speculations on the near-term prospects for such one-time standbys as Quattro Pro and WordPerfect.

Then came some generalized grousing about the relentless march of technology and the constant pressure to upgrade, resisted by a brave few, such as fellow NYC freelancer Laura Newman, who offered a startling admission: "I still refuse to buy a microwave."

Soon the list was off on a three-day discussion of whether there is anything to the idea that microwave ovens pose health threats. The details of free radicals and O-H bonds thoroughly confused your humble cybrarian, who just wants to use the thing to warm up his leftover Beijing Beef.

Fortunately, Santa Cruz freelancer Jennie Dusheck provided relief in the form of not one, but two, tales of potatoes exploding in a conventional oven: "My grandmother repeatedly warned my father that he had not pierced the potatoes before baking them. My father made fun of her, stuck a fork in one of the potatoes, and pieces flew all over the oven and out the front of the oven door. I was 10. My grandmother just smirked."

To read more, check the "Kodak files," "microwaves," and "food fight" threads in the NASW-freelance archives for May, available under the listservs/archives links on the left side of the main page at **www.nasw.org**.

Also on NASW-freelance, in mid-March, Eliot Spitzer's escapades set off an exchange of almost 100 messages on what many call fooling around but science writers in the know call "extra pair copulations." Indulge yourself with the complete thread, "Science has a contribution to make."

NASW-talk

The ethics of a well-known public radio show came under critical review in the online magazine Slate.com, prompting another May thread on NASW's second major discussion list.

Slate's story by NASW members Shannon Brownlee and Jeanne Lenzer accused "The Infinite Mind" of failing to disclose that scientists appearing on a recent report on Prozac had financial ties to the makers of antidepressants, and therefore had conflicts of interests.

The accusation prompted some back-and-forth on the popular Romenesko media news website. On NASW-talk, though, the discussion quickly turned to the practical concerns of NASW members who publicize the work of researchers who may have such conflicts.

"I must admit that a section about university researchers gave me pause as a PIO. I don't regularly ask my researchers who they have been funded by, even though I sometimes write about research with controversial or commercial implications," wrote University of North Carolina-Charlotte science writer James Hathaway.

Indiana University media relations specialist David Bricker weighed in with a cautionary anecdote: "A few years ago, a writer at Purdue University wrote an 'I'm an expert' (shudder) press release in which the primary source argued there is nothing particularly unhealthy about farmed salmon," Bricker wrote. "Turns out this Purdue food scientist, Charles Santerre, was a paid spokesman for and advisor to Salmon of the Americas, a conglomerate of salmon farmers. Most journalists who used Purdue's food scientist as a contrarian in their salmon stories did not mention Santerre's secondary affiliation."

Washington, D.C., freelancer Bob Roehr offered a suggestion: "I've advocated that each researcher create a funding 'vita,' updated at least once a year, as part of their website," he said. "It would also make sense for the university to have a central 'directory' of funding that links to those pages. And the university should create its own page that lists patents and business arrangements that the institution participates in. Eventually it is going to come to this and the sooner an institution gets out front on it, the better."

For more, see the thread, "Disclosing conflicts of interest" in the May archives for NASW-talk. ■

OUR GANG

by Pam Frost Gorder


PHOTO BY JO MCCULTY

A portrait of the artist. In five years of writing this column, **Jeff Grabmeier** never failed to report anyone's accomplishments—except his own. After 23 years on the science writing staff at Ohio State University, Jeff has been promoted to director of research communications. And while he is co-chair of the NASW education committee, he still finds time to freelance for several consumer and college magazines, and has written chapters for the books *Soul of the Sky* and *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Family and Personal Relationships*. Congratulate Jeff and ask him how he manages to do it all at grabmeier.1@osu.edu.

Crafting tomorrow's writers. In April 2008, **Sandra Katzman** joined Osaka University, the largest national university in Japan, as a tenured professor of English. She says that some of her published science journalism and communication studies find their way into her classes in writing. Sandra can be reached in Kyoto at s.katzman@stanfordalumni.org.

Pam Frost Gorder is assistant director of research communications at Ohio State University, in Columbus, Ohio. Send news about your life to Pam at gorder.1@osu.edu.

Drawing the best out of her students. **Alison Bass**, a former medical writer for *The Boston Globe* and author of *Side Effects: A Prosecutor, a Whistleblower, and a Bestselling Antidepressant on Trial*, has accepted a position as senior lecturer in journalism at Mount Holyoke College, in South Hadley, Mass. She will begin teaching there in the fall, and will continue to write about medical research issues for her blog at **www.alison-bass.com** and in magazines and newspapers. You can reach Alison at alison@alison-bass.com.

Molding young science writers. Longtime Paris-based *Science* correspondent **Michael Balter** has been teaching in Boston University's science and medical journalism program this year. He says that he enjoys it so much, he is returning for the fall semester. Congratulate Michael on following his muse at michael.balter@gmail.com.

He's writing about the healing arts. **Joel Shurkin** says he's finishing up his job as Snedden Chair in the department of journalism at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and will now edit the *E-Journal* for the Center for Health and Health Care in Schools, at the George Washington University School of Public Health. He'll be working in Alaska until July, when he plans to return to Baltimore "quite happily thawed out." Send warm thoughts his way at shurkin@mac.com.

Sketching a dramatic profile. Among freelance writers honored by the American Society of Journalists and Authors this year was **Michelle Nijhuis**. She took the top spot in the profile category for her story "Of Murder and Microscopes," published in the May/June 2007 issue of Sierra magazine. Congratulate her at michelle@nasw.org.

Painting a tropical sunrise. Freelancer **Bryn Nelson** has been named a National Tropical Botanical Garden Environmental Journalism Fellow for 2008. He'll travel to Kauai, Hawaii, to immerse himself in the culture and ecology of the island. Through this experience, fellows not only increase the depth of their environmental reporting, but also contribute to a handbook for reporting on tropical ecological issues. Give Bryn an "Aloha!" at bdnelson@nasw.org.

Multi-media artist. **Ira Flatow**, executive producer and host of NPR's "Talk of the Nation: Science Friday," has been elected a member of the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering, a nonprofit institution that aims to "provide information and advice on science and technology to the government, industry and people of Connecticut and to encourage youth's interest in science, engineering, and technology." Ira points out that despite holding a degree in engineering, he hasn't worked as an engineer a day in his life. Maybe not, but he has covered any number of engineering marvels on radio and television over the last 35 years, and authored several books including *They All Laughed ... From Light Bulbs to Lasers: The Fascinating Stories Behind the Great Inventions That Have Changed Our Lives*. Congratulate Ira at iflatow@iraflatow.com.

Now an independent artist. **Peter Calamai**, science reporter at the *Toronto Star*, is retiring from that position at the end of June, and plans to continue writing as a freelancer. He's capping his 10-year career at the *Star* with honors: The Canadian Association of Physicists has just awarded him the Peter Kirkby Memorial Medal. He is the first nonphysicist to receive the prize, which is given for communication of science to the public. This follows his winning, in January, the American Meteorological Society's award for Distinguished Reporting in the Atmospheric Sciences. Peter points out that he first became an NASW member in 1970, left science writing for foreign corresponding in 1973, then re-joined our organization when he came to the *Star* in 1998—so his membership has a 25-year gap. Salute Peter on what must surely be some kind of record at pcalamai@magma.ca.

He's created a masterpiece. A longtime staffer and current freelance contributor to *TIME* magazine, **Michael Lemonick** is now being lauded as among the best writers in the history of the magazine. His work is featured in the new book *TIME: 85 Years of Great Writing*. He countered what he called the "somewhat immodest" title of the book with some modesty: "It's a limited honor in one sense, given that only those who have written for *TIME* are eligible. On the other hand, I'm in pretty good company, including James Agee, John McPhee, John Hersey, and Calvin Trillin." Lemonick also reports that he's taken a job as senior writer for Climate Central, a new climate change think tank headquartered in Princeton, N.J. Drop him a line at mlemonick@aol.com.

Carving out space on the web. Launching a "knowledge site for all things space"—that's the goal of **Dave Mosher**, who's just assumed a newly created position at Discovery Communications. Since becoming Discovery's space producer in April, he's blogged from Flagstaff, Ariz., at the construction site of the Discovery Channel Telescope, among other adventures. Dave

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.

comes to his new job by way of Imaginova Corp., where he was a staff writer for SPACE.com and LiveScience.com. Ask him to explain the physics of his new job title at dave@davemosher.com.

Understanding abstract art. While book author and reviewer **Phillip Manning** often writes about outdoor life, he reports that he recently signed a contract with Chelsea House Publishers to explore a different area: physics. He'll address the smallest and largest aspects of the universe in three books titled *Quantum Theory, Gravity, and The Theory of Relativity*. Phillip can be reached at pvmanning@mindspring.com.

Illustrating a point. On April 4, **Beryl Benderly**'s new monthly column was launched on the *Science* magazine website, and was boosted by an ad in that week's paper edition. Called "Taken for Granted," it covers "early-career issues for postdocs and other researchers who deserve better" and runs on the first Friday of each month in the Science Careers section. Beryl is at Blbink@aol.com.

Carving a new path. **Ann Cairns** departs the Geological Society of America (GSA) after nine years as director of communications, marketing, and sales. Starting June 2008, she'll do consulting, mentoring, and project work in marketing and communications. And, she says, she'll even do a little writing of her own. Wish her well at acairns01@comcast.net.

A new gallery opening. With Ann Cairn's departure (reported above), **Christa Stratton**, formerly marketing manager at GSA, has stepped in as the society's interim director of communications, and marketing. One of her first official acts on the job was to join NASW! Write to her at cstratton@geosociety.org to find out what's happening in the geosciences, and welcome her to the fold.

The art of friendship. Clinical psychologist and award-winning freelance writer **Irene S. Levine**, Ph.D., was invited to blog about female friendships in The Huffington Post. She's offering "a sprinkling of advice and wisdom for women about how to nurture these vital ties, and how to move beyond the hurt and loss when friendships fail." Her book on the same topic is scheduled to be published by Overlook Press. Irene is at LevineI@nki.rfmh.org.

Observing nature's artistry. For Earth Week, Science Writers in New York board member **Carol Milano** was asked by America's first urban Audubon Center to present her well-received fall 2007 program, "Positive Elements," a 90-minute evidence-based walking tour with stops at 13 sites—including waterfalls and sensitive wildlife areas—in Brooklyn's Prospect Park. At each location, she shares research on nature's physiological, cognitive, or emotional effects. Take a moment to experience nature's beauty wherever you are, and then thank Carol for the reminder at milano@nasw.org. ■

WORDS' WORTH WANTS YOU

by Richard Robinson

Since it opened for business in March 2007, Words' Worth—NASW's freelance rates-and-terms database—has accumulated over 250 entries, a compendium of members' experiences with clients from *Audubon* to *Zoogoer*. Each entry provides information on the type of work, pay rate, contract terms, and has comments that give the flavor of the gig. Entries are searchable by field or text terms. Are you wondering what "industry" clients are paying? What *Nature* is offering for contract terms? Whether FNAS rights are a thing of the past? How quickly MSNBC.com will write you a check? It's all there.

When the freelance committee was designing Words' Worth, we wondered if anyone would take the time to write comments. Well, they do, and for me, at least, these have become the best part of the database. There's a lot of praise for good editors ("The editors at this magazine are real pros, and this assignment was a pleasure. Editing was quick and solid") and fair criticism of bad ones ("...slow in turning around copy…and not always communicative, so a set of negative comments coming deep in the revision process brought me up short"). There are a fair number of horror stories ("...like root canal with failed anesthesia") and lots of happy ones.

But we need many more entries, from many more members. Do you do freelance radio work? Submit an entry and double our radio-related items. Have you written a book? Add your experience to the growing list. Write about policy or engineering or social sciences? We want to hear about it.

So drop by the website (**www.nasw.org/members/market/index.htm**), spend a while reading your colleagues' stories, and then add your own. Words' Worth wants you.■

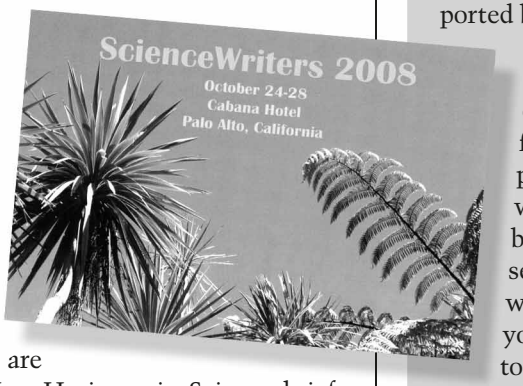
Richard Robinson is chair of the NASW freelance committee.

SCIENCEWRITERS 2008 MEETS IN PALO ALTO OCTOBER 25-29

by Tinsley Davis and Paul Raeburn

On a recent site visit to the Cabana Hotel, in Palo Alto—site of the ScienceWriters 2008 annual meeting—the events coordinator looked shocked when asked about back-up locations for an outdoor lunch in the event of rain. Apparently, the October weather in California is so splendid that contingency plans aren't necessary. So start daydreaming about catching up with colleagues over a leisurely, sunny lunch as you plan to attend this year's annual meeting, Oct. 25-29. We have a fantastic program on tap.

The program committee has picked a dozen workshop sessions from many excellent proposals, with a focus on the meeting's location in the technology hub of Silicon Valley and the increasing digital nature of communication. The sessions will tackle subjects that affect us all, such as new delivery methods in the multimedia landscape to reach ever-changing audiences. There also will be sessions to hone the skills of those new to the craft, those finding themselves in a new segment of the business, and plenty of fodder for the veterans among us as we think about new perspectives on, and venues for, science writing. All this and ample time for networking and socializing in the sunshine.



The Oct. 25 NASW professional development workshops are followed by the CASW New Horizons in Science briefings, Oct. 26-28. The meeting concludes with a day of fields trips on Oct. 29. All of these activities, from professional development sessions to science talks and field trips, wrapped into a few days, constitute the only national meeting for science writers by science writers.

New Horizons is dipping into the wealth of talent available in the Bay Area: a mix of researchers from host-institution Stanford as well as scientists from UC San Francisco and UC Berkeley. They will be joined by other researchers from across the country to fill out the program offerings. Since the meeting is one week before the presidential election, an "election special" session will focus on the science of polling. The latest research on earthquakes in California will be explored sparing us,

Tinsley Davis is executive director of NASW. Paul Raeburn is program director for CASW's New Horizons in Science.

Fellowships available for travel assistance to the fall meeting

NASW Freelance Travel Fellowship

Open to NASW members who are freelance writers, it provides up to $900 to cover the costs of attending ScienceWriters 2008. These fellowships are supported by the Authors Coalition of America funds. NOTE: Before receiving reimbursement, fellows must submit a short report of one or more aspects of the workshops, suitable for publication on the NASW website and potentially in *ScienceWriters*. Assignments will be made prior to the meeting and must be filed within 48 hours after the assigned session. To apply send a short (less than 500 words) statement of interest and a copy of your resume or CV to Tinsley Davis, director@nasw.org. DEADLINE: Aug. 15, 2008.

NASW Graduate Travel Fellowship

Open to current NASW student members enrolled in a science writing program, it provides up to $900 to cover the costs of attending ScienceWriters 2008. These fellowships are supported by the Authors Coalition of America funds. NOTE: Before receiving reimbursement, fellows must submit a short report of one or more aspects of the workshops, suitable for publication on the NASW website and potentially in *ScienceWriters*. Assignments will be made prior to the meeting and must be filed within 48 hours after the assigned session. To apply, send a short (less than 500 words) statement of interest and a copy of your resume or CV to Tinsley Davis, director@nasw.org. DEADLINE: Sept. 10, 2008.

CASW Traveling Fellowship

These fellowships are intended primarily for U.S. reporters from smaller metropolitan print and broadcast news outlets, freelancers and online journalists with a demonstrated interest in science writing and offers up to $1,200 to cover the costs of attending ScienceWriters 2008. To apply, submit three collated sets containing each of the following: 1) a brief (no more than 500 words) expression of interest, 2) a resume (with home and office telephone numbers), 3) no more than three clips or broadcast transcripts (on any topic), and 4) a nominating letter from a senior editor, news director, or producer. Mail submissions to CASW New Horizons Fellowships, P. O. Box 910, Hedgesville, WV 25427. DEADLINE: Aug. 15, 2008.

we trust, the need to actually experience a temblor. We'll get a taste of Silicon Valley with a fascinating presentation on machine-human communication, or "how to talk to your GPS so it will listen."

Field trips are planned to California wine country, complete with scientists and corkscrews. There's also a day-long visit to research institutions in nearby Monterey, including a visit to the renowned Monterey Bay Aquarium. Also on tap is a visit to NASA Ames to see and experience research on astrobiology, robotics, and tour flight-simulation equipment. It's your chance to find out if you have the right stuff.

Registration for ScienceWriters 2008 opens Aug. 1 at **www.ScienceWriters2008.org**. ■

NEW GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN WRITING LAUNCHED

A one-year certificate program on writing about innovation and sustainability is scheduled to begin in fall 2008 in the Seattle area. Offered by the Bainbridge Graduate Institute (BGI), the program focuses on communicating with general audiences about new technologies for socially responsible and environmentally sustainable practices. Applications for the program are now being accepted.

According to the program's director Deborah L. Illman, who has taught science writing at the University of Washington since 1999, the course of study is geared for students who are considering a one-year program in science writing or technical communication and who want to gain news writing skills while developing a special focus on innovative technologies, environmental issues, and sustainable business practices. Courses cover news, feature, and creative nonfiction writing along with an internship experience and portfolio project. Students may apply for the year-long program or they may enroll for individual courses on a space-available basis.

Applications for the program are now being accepted.

BGI was established by entrepreneur Gifford Pinchot III and colleagues to offer new M.B.A. and certificate programs to "prepare diverse leaders to build enterprises that are economically successful, socially responsible, and environmentally sustainable."

For more information about the writing program, contact Deborah Illman at deborah@illmansci.com or phone 206-523-7218. For information about BGI, visit **www.bgiedu.org**. ■

(source: news release)

CHRIS BRODIE RECEIVES FULBRIGHT SCHOLARSHIP

NASW member Christopher R. Brodie has been named a Fulbright Scholar for 2008-2009.

His four-month Fulbright project aims to help scientists learn how to explain their work in plain language. Starting in August, he will conduct science-writing workshops at the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, in Oslo, Norway.

"Ultimately, I hope these activities will yield long-term benefits for public engagement in science and richer collaborations between Norway and the U.S.," Brodie says.

In addition to teaching, he plans to attend seminars on immunology, ecology, and geology.

His…project aims to help scientists learn how to explain their work in plain language.

Brodie holds a Ph.D. in molecular, cellular, development biology, and genetics from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and undergraduate degrees in biology and English from the University of Georgia. He was a postdoctoral fellow in neurobiology at Duke University.

In April of this year, Brodie was named vice president of corporate communications at the North Carolina Biotechnology Center (**www.ncbiotech.org**). Prior to this he spent five years as associate editor for *American Scientist* magazine, published by Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society. ■

(source: news release)

Become a Fulbright Scholar

Chris Brodie wants NASW members to know that Fulbright scholarships aren't just for academics. The program is open to professionals, too, with specific slots for journalism and communications in selected countries.

"I applied for an 'all disciplines' award, which allowed me a little more latitude in specifying my intended audience and topic," Brodie said. "Fulbright sends 800 artists, scientists, businesspeople, and professionals to 140 different countries each year, so there's a significant opportunity."

*For more information visit **www.cies.org**.*

REGIONAL GROUPS

by Suzanne Clancy

New York


PHOTO BY MARC LIEBERMAN

On March 27 SWINY launched its spring season with "Science News on Display," a program showcasing the trend of science centers and museums to serve as news outlets with current-science exhibits providing visitors with up-to-date science news stories. The event, cosponsored by the Science Communication Consortium, took place at NYU's science, health, and environmental reporting program headquarters. Speakers included Susan Heilman, Boston Museum of Science, who gave a tour of the museum's science and technology stage via Skype video conferencing. Laura Allen, American Museum of Natural History, showed that institution's "science bulletins" and Karen de Seve, (then) from Liberty Science Center, showcased the "Breakthroughs" gallery and current science kiosks.

On May 7, at a New York Public Library branch, SWINY hosted author Sue Halpern, author of *Can't Remember What I Forgot: The Good News From The Front Lines of Memory Research*. Halpern's book debunks common myths about Alzheimer's disease and normal memory loss, and offers information about key discoveries being made in these fields. She researched the book through visits to brain scanning suites, chemistry labs, and mice nurseries at medical schools as well as to pharmaceutical firms and scientific meetings. Along with telling an academic tale, the book memoirs Halpern's experience with her late father's memory decline.

Chris Brodie (left) and Karl Bates engage in a round of "Stump the SCONC" at SCONC's birthday party.

On May 13, SWINY presented "Rainwater Harvesting," the urban adaptation of the ancient technique to catch rain for later use. At Dias y Flores Garden in the East Village, attendees learned how rainwater harvesting works, saw a state-of-the-art system, gorgeous flower gardens, and intricately designed pathways made of recycled bottles. Lars Chellberg, site coordinator of the Open Space Greening Program/Council on the Environment of NYC, and Carolyn McCrory, a community gardener led the event.

And for just plain schmoozing and networking, SWINY held its spring social at the Windfall Tavern, in midtown Manhattan, on April 9. Visit **www.swiny.org** for more details on all of these events.

North Carolina

On May 29, the Science Communicators of North Carolina (SCONC) celebrated its one-year anniversary with a blend of career conversation and fun at the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, in Research Triangle Park. After a catered dinner and birthday cake provided by BWF, Helen Chickering concocted the "Stump the SCONC" game, where audience participants posed pragmatic and sometimes philosophical questions about science communications to a panel of SCONC board members—Chickering, Ernie Hood, Chris Brodie, and Karl Bates. The board responded to each question and then pointed it back to the audience. Any audience member who had a better (or funnier) answer would win one of many eccentric prizes. The varied topics included questions about depoliticizing global warming, pitching web-based information to venture capitalists, creating interactive museum displays (this question involved a hypothetical Yeti penis bone), and career advice for freelancers on diversifying a client base.

Washington, D.C.

In May, DCswans took a behind-the-scenes tour of the National Zoo. The tour included the reptile house, where Brian Gratwicke told the group about the global decline in amphibian populations driven by the chytrid fungus. At the cheetah station, they heard from Adrienne Crosier and Craig Saffoe about the zoo's research on these animals. Zoo scientists were the first to successfully freeze and preserve cheetah sperm in the mid-1990s, and the first to transport and use frozen cheetah semen from Africa. Zoo breeders can thus introduce wild genes into the captive cheetah population while leaving the wild cheetahs in the wild. Crosier and Saffoe also explained what it takes to get captive cheetahs in the mood, which involves keeping female cheetahs by themselves and males in groups.

Suzanne Clancy is a science communications consultant and freelance journalist in San Diego, Calif. Send information about regional meetings and events to sclancyphd@yahoo.com.

Those who attended the commissary portion of the tour heard from animal nutritionist Karen Lisi about the science of feeding the zoo's fauna. Not many zoos have dedicated, centralized commissaries, and among those that do, the National Zoo's is enviably large. It has rooms for produce, meat, fish, live prey, and even a ripening room for bananas and other fruit. There are recipe books listing what each kind of animal should eat every day. When Lisi has to figure out how to feed a new animal, she said she doesn't worry about what it looks like on the outside—she just asks what its GI tract looks like.

Chicago

Bill Harms, University of Chicago, reports that Chicago Science Writers is "seriously upgrading" its local organization in many ways, including working more closely with the graduate science writing class at Northwestern's Medill school of journalism. One professor is using Chicago Science Writers meetings as assignment opportunities for students. [An example of a Chicago Science Writers meeting reported by grad students Christopher B. Sweeney and Town Travis can be found at **http://news.medill.northwestern.edu/chicago/news.aspx?id=86593**.] That meeting, held in April, featured paleontologist Paul Sereno, who led science writers on a tour through his University of Chicago basement labs. On display were rare fossils dating back millions of years that fit in specimen drawers to the near perfect 6-foot skull of "SuperCroc" (Sarcosuchus imperator), a reptile discovered in Africa by Sereno.

Northwest

The Northwest Science Writers Association's year began on a high note with a party in the Chinese Room at the top of Seattle's historic Smith Tower. Putting aside shop talk and other typical nerdities, NSWA members who were not able to make the annual NASW/CASW meeting in Spokane got another chance to be entertained by Lynda Williams, the physics chanteuse. It was a fine post-holiday/kick-off-2008 event for the 100 or so attendees. Keeping up the spirit of chatting and chewing, freelancer Lisa Farino organized a monthly "Freelance Friday," where freelancers and those with "real" jobs could get together and discuss heady scientific topics.

In February, at the Seattle Biomedical Research Institute, NSWAnians learned about genome-based research to develop a vaccine for malaria. Highlights included a video of a mosquito injecting the malaria parasite into a mouse and a tour of the mosquito insectary, the domain of the mosquito-whisperer. Who knew how hard it was to raise mosquitoes? Turns out they like Special K.

April's notable event was a behind-the-scenes preview of the University of Washington's annual engineering open house. We saw the wind tunnel that has tested everything from the B-29 to Lance Armstrong, a mechanical fish, and robotic prostheses that would put RoboCop to shame. And finally, in late May, nearly a dozen NSWAnians helped judge writings, websites, and music for the Northwest Association of Biomedical Research's annual Student Biotech Expo.

San Diego

San Diego Science Writers Association (SANDSWA) is also showing more energy by launching a website (**www.sandswa.org**), adopting a dues structure to fund programs, and executing a survey to solicit program ideas and the volunteers to carry them out. ■

PEW SURVEY SHOWS SCIENCE NEWS SQUEEZED

Watch five hours of U.S. cable news, and on average you will see around 35 minutes on election campaigns, another 36 minutes on U.S. foreign policy, and 26 minutes on crime—but only about one minute on science and technology, slightly more on the environment, and only a little over three minutes on medicine and health care. This is not just an issue with cable: science fares little better in other forms of television, radio, or print news, according to the Pew Research Center's *The State of the News Media 2008* report, released on 17 March.

It would be a mistake to get too alarmed about this analysis. Science news in the United States has indeed been squeezed to around 2 percent of the total since the events of 11 September 2001. But it was never that high, hovering around 4–6 percent from the mid-1970s until 2001. And the drop does not reflect a falling public interest in science, as much as the media's increased emphasis on foreign policy, war, and the homeland: the diversity of U.S. news coverage has decreased across the board since 9/11.

The Pew Center's numbers offer another reason not to be gloomy: the Internet is overtaking television as the public's main source of science news. This means that a larger global audience can now access, on demand, a great diversity of science coverage from media outlets around the world. Moreover, the public are no longer just passive consumers of information. The Internet is now the first place people go to look for more information on a scientific topic, such as stem cells or climate change. Thanks to the Internet, in short, one could argue that the overall state of science communication is better now than at any time in the past.

Yet there is no reason to be complacent. As the media industry moves online, some shakeout is inevitable. Straight news is becoming a commodity, which will be dominated by fewer players. Independent science desks and media can have a future in this envi-

ronment, but only if they move up the food chain and provide proactive, deeper, must-read analyses instead of me-too articles reacting to the latest press releases.

In that context, perhaps the most worrisome finding in the Pew report is that this type of resource-intensive science coverage is precisely the most threatened: As the newspaper industry responds to falling circulation with sweeping cuts, science desks are among the first to suffer.

Media executives should pause to rethink these cuts to science desks and coverage on two counts. One is that this choice is often influenced by the widespread notion that science is of comparatively little interest to readers. According to Pew Center data, however, around two-thirds of all those who search online for news are after science and health news—second only to the weather—with technology coming third, ahead of politics and business. That trend is confirmed in reports published this past December by the European Commission.

Another, and more important, reason to sustain high-quality science journalism is that, in this context as much as any other, the media have a responsibility (with rewards in audience response) to fulfill their watchdog role. Many contemporary societal issues are both science-related and complex. Science reporters are essential for keeping tabs on government at every level, ensuring that decision-makers listen to the best experts and scientific evidence available. They should also be in the front line of countering the misrepresentation of science, whether by antiscience groups, multinational corporations, or politicians—or indeed, by scientists, and their institutions hyping their own work to gain fame and funding.■

"Critical journalism" (editorial), Nature *27 March 2008.*

BOOKS BY AND FOR MEMBERS

by Ruth Winter

The Pope, the Bishop, and the Philosopher **by Alexander Dorozynski (NASW), published by Le Cherche Midi.**

Dorozynski has written a novel based on fact. During the 13th century, the University of Paris became the major center of learning in Europe, introducing the teaching of Aristotle, who was seen as a threat to Catholic dogma. In 1277, the Bishop of Paris condemned more than 200 "manifest and detestable errors" taught at the faculty of arts, and the Inquisitor of France charges several teachers with heresy. But Peter of Spain, a scientist and doctor of medicine, was elected pope and became John XXI. He opposed excessive dogmatism and ordered the bishops to justify their actions. Weeks later, John XXI was killed in a strange accident. Dogmatic princes of the church then gained full power. Many masters left the University of Paris, which lost much of its prestige. "Many historians consider these events as important as the trial of Galileo more than two centuries later," Dorozynski says, "But much of the evidence has been lost or destroyed and the full story has never been told." Hence this historical fiction (published in French). Contact Dorozynski at doro3@wanadoo.fr or doro3@sapo.pt. The person in charge of communications and development is Catherine Broders, Le Cherche Midi, 17 rue du Regard, 75006 Paris, e-mail cbroders@cherche-midi.com.

The Complete Idiot's Guide to String Theory **by George Musser (NASW), published by Alpha Books.**

Pretty much everyone feels like an idiot when confronted with string theory—and that includes physicists. Author George Musser writes: "String theory is the leading, if controversial, candidate for a fully unified theory of physics. Despite what the title says, this book surveys not only this one theory but a broad range of ideas for a unified theory, picks a way through the minefield of claims and counterclaims for them, describes what such a theory would mean not just for physics but for the wider world, and explains how it might be tested experimentally." An acquisitions editor came up with the idea and cold-called Musser, an editor at *Scientific American*, to ask about potential authors. Musser put his own name forward as well as with several others. The publisher initially asked for the 300 pages in three months, after which Musser could presumably write *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Insanity*. Ultimately, the project took a year from initial contact to final submission. Apart from a short stint at a writer's retreat, Musser somehow was able to interweave it with his day job. More information at **www.strings.musser.com**. Contact Musser at gmusser@sciam.com or 212-451-8809.

Tomorrow's Table: Organic Farming, Genetics, and the Future of Food **by Pamela C. Ronald (NASW) and Raoul W. Adamchak, published by Oxford University Press.**

If opposites attract, these husband-and-wife co-authors have produced a well-balanced book. Pamela Ronald is professor of plant pathology and chair of the plant genomics program at UC Davis, where she studies the role that genes play in a plant's response to its environment in modern agricultural politics, organic farming, and genetic engineering. Raoul Adamchak manages the student-run organic farm on campus. Together, they explore the juncture where their methods can (and they argue, should) meet to ensure environmentally sustainable food production. Revealing common principles and "leveling the playing field," this book roughly chronicles

one year in the lives of the Ronald-Adamchack family. Through dialogue with friends and family, the authors explore the use of genetically engineered (GE) agriculture and the concerns expressed by consumers. They discuss the contents of their own largely organic pantry, what they choose to feed their children, and how over the last 10 years of their marriage, they have developed a specific criteria for the use of GE in agriculture. Ronald and Adamchack explain what geneticists and organic farmers actually do and help readers distinguish between fact and fiction in the debate about crop genetic engineering. Ronald can be contacted at pcronald@ucdavis.edu. Pamela on her blog pamelaronald.blogspot.com. The book's publicist is Christian Purdy at Christian.purdy@oup.com.

Microcosm: E. coli and the New Science of Life **by Carl Zimmer (NASW), published by Random House.**

Are there rules that all living things must obey? Is death inevitable? If we rewound the tape of life and let evolution run a second time, would it end up like the original? To explore these questions, Zimmer says he wrote "an (un)natural history of E. coli." Scientists have been earning Nobel Prizes for decades by poking and prodding this microbe, and their work is coalescing into an extraordinary portrait of a living thing. Today, with engineered E. coli spewing out everything from insulin to jet fuel, the microbe is redefining the boundaries of life itself. "While pondering imponderables like 'What is life?' I came to be obsessed with E. coli," Zimmer says. "Using it as a guide, I ventured into fascinating areas of research, from synthetic biology to experimental evolution." *Publishers' Weekly* wrote of the book: "When most readers hear the words *E. coli*, they think tainted hamburger or toxic spinach. Noted science writer Zimmer says there are in fact many different strains of E. coli, some coexisting quite happily with us in our digestive tracts. These rod-shaped bacteria were among the first organisms to have their genome mapped, and today they are the toolbox of the genetic engineering industry and even of high school scientists." Zimmer can be reached at carl@carlzimmer.com. His website is www.carlzimmer.com. The book's publicist is Katie Freeman at kfreeman@randomhouse.com.

The Alzheimer's Action Plan: The Experts' Guide to the Best Diagnosis and Treatment for Memory Problems **by P. Murali Doraiswamy, Lisa P. Gwyther, Tina Adler (NASW), published by St. Martin's Press.**

The three authors have very different areas of expertise, so the reader gets a many-sided view of Alzheimer's disease. P. Murali Doraiswamy is a physician who specializes in Alzheimer's and other brain disorders, Lisa Gwyther is a social worker with 38 years of experience in aging and Alzheimer's services, and Tina Adler is a freelance science writer who cared for family members with the disease. Five million Americans have Alzheimer's disease with a new diagnosis being made every 72 seconds, and millions more are worried (due to mild memory loss) or at risk (due to family history). Although experts agree that early diagnosis and treatment are essential, many people—and even their doctors—don't know where to turn for authoritative, state-of-the-art advice and answers to their questions. The authors provide pertinent information including:

- The best tests to determine if this is—or is not—Alzheimer's disease
- The most (and least) effective medical treatments
- Coping with behavioral and emotional changes through the early and middle stages
- Gaining access to the latest clinical trials
- Understanding the future of Alzheimer's

The book's publicist is Tara Cibelli at Tara.Cibelli@stmartins.com. Adler can be reached at tadler2@verizon.net and by 301-229-4818 or 202-309-8563 (cell).

Life on Earth—and Beyond **by Pamela S. Turner (NASW), published by Charlesbridge Publishing.**

NASA astrobiologist Christopher McKay has searched the earth's most extreme environments in his quest to understand what factors are necessary to sustain life. Author Pamela Turner offers readers an inside look at McKay's research, explaining his findings and his hopes for future exploration both on Earth and beyond. Behind-the-scenes photos capture McKay, his expeditions, and the amazing microbes that survive against all odds. "I wrote *Life on Earth—and Beyond*," said Turner, "because I was interested in microbes in extreme environments, and through the course of writing a couple of articles on the subject (for both children and adults), I got to know Dr. McKay at NASA Ames Research Center. I thought children would find his job very cool—he visits extreme environments on Earth and studies the microbes that survive in those places as a model for the kind of life that might be found elsewhere in the universe." Each chapter in the book is about a different research site and why it is interesting to space scientists (for example, the Siberian permafrost is of interest because of permafrost on Mars). "I think microbiology is a great subject, but microbes don't get that much attention," Turner said, "But space science certainly fascinates kids, so I hope my book for children ages 9 to 12 will help them look at both microbes and space science a little differently." Turner can be reached at: www.pamelasturner.com.

A Life In The Wild: George Schaller's Struggle to Save the Last Great Beasts **by Pamela S. Turner (NASW), published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.**

For more than 50 years, George Schaller has been on a mission to save the world's great wild beasts and

their environments. In this biography, Turner examines the life and groundbreaking work of the man *International Wildlife* calls "the world's foremost field biologist." Schaller's landmark research demonstrated it is possible to study dangerous animals in their own habitats: mountain gorillas in Central Africa, predatory tigers in India, mysterious snow leopards in the Himalayas, and many others. His insights about species and environment led him to successfully advocate for the protection of over 190,000 square miles of wilderness around the world—an area the size of Spain. Turner says the biography came about "because I contacted Schaller a few years ago about getting a photo of him in the Congo in 1959-1960 to go in my earlier children's book, *Gorilla Doctors*. He was so gracious, and I started wondering if anybody had written a biography for children about him, because he was the first person to do long-term field studies of so many high-interest animals. Nobody had, and Schaller agreed to be interviewed for the book and to provide images from his extensive collection. Turner says after the advance is paid back all her royalties from the book will be donated back to the Wildlife Conservation Society for projects designated by Schaller, who is the vice president of science and exploration for WCS and still spends many months of the year in the field. Turner can be reached at: www.pamelasturner.com

***Davenport's Dream: 21st Century Reflections on Heredity and Eugenics* by Charles Davenport, Jan A. Witkowski, Ph.D. (NASW) and John R. Inglis (editors), published by Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press.**

In 1898, Charles Davenport came to Cold Spring Harbor as director of the Biological Laboratory. He was one of the first American biologists to take up Mendel's work and published several papers on human genetics in the early years of the 20th century. In 1911, Davenport published *Heredity in Relation to Eugenics*, describing what was then known about the inheritance of human physical and behavioral traits. However, as the leading scientific force of the American eugenics movement, Davenport devoted most of the book to how the new science of heredity would lead to a deeper understanding of human nature and the causes of social problems. Considered a seminal work in both human heredity and eugenics, the book has been out of print for many years. Jan Witkowski, executive director of the Banbury Center at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, and John Inglis, publisher and executive director of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, decided that Davenport's book deserved reprinting. "We chose to reprint the book as a facsimile copy, without editing or adding footnotes, to retain the distinctive quality of books of that period," Witkowski said. "Furthermore, the topics that interested Davenport —inherited disorders, psychiatric disorders, geographical origins—continue to provoke discussions and controversies even as we move into the era of 'personal genomes.'" The book includes essays commenting on Davenport's topics and their relevance to today's discussions from authors such as Matt Ridley, James Watson, Jan Witkowski, Elof Carlson, Maynard Olson, Doug Wallace, Phil Reilly, Ronald Dworkin, and Lewis Wolpert. The book is aimed at anyone who is interested in the history of genetics and its applications to society. Witkoswski can be reached at witkowsk@cshl.edu or 516-367-8398.

***The Fertility Diet* by Jorge Chavarro, Ph.D., Walter C. Willett, M.D., Patrick J. Skerrett (NASW), published by McGraw-Hill.**

Based on the findings from the landmark long-term Nurses' Health Study, the authors report on the effects of diet and other lifestyle changes on fertility among nearly 18,000 female nurses whose diets were evaluated during a time when they were trying to become pregnant. Over eight years of follow-up, most of them did conceive. About one in six women, though, had some trouble getting pregnant, including hundreds who experienced ovulatory infertility—a problem related to the maturation or release of a mature egg each month. The project scrutinized everything from alcohol to vitamins. "When we compared their diets, exercise habits, and other lifestyle choices with those of women who readily got pregnant, several key differences emerged," Patrick Skerret said. These differences have been translated into fertility-boosting strategies, and the book makes available to couples the results of the first systematic look at diet and fertility in humans. "Farmers and ranchers have studied diet and fertility in cows and chickens far better than researchers have looked at connections in humans," Skerrett said. Co-author Jorge Chavarro is a research fellow at the Harvard School of Public Health studying the role of diet and lifestyle on reproductive function. Walter Willett, chairman of the department of nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health, is one of the leaders of the Nurses' Health Study. Skerrett is the editor of the *Harvard Heart Letter*. *The Fertility Diet* made the cover of *Newsweek* and won an award from the American Medical Writers Association. Skerrett can be reached at pat_skerrett@hms.harvard.edu or 617-432-1791. The book's publicist is Leslie Wolfe Arista, at 617-713-4130 or leswolfe@mediabuzzpub.com.

***Break Through Your Set Point: How to Finally Lose the Weight You Want and Keep it Off* by George L. Blackburn, M.D., Ph.D. and Julie Corliss (NASW), published by Collins.**

The book offers science-based explanations—and solutions—to the two biggest problems dieters face: hitting a weight-loss plateau and regaining lost weight.

Losing just 10 percent of your original body weight, followed by a six-month period of holding steady at your new weight, can help reset your set point, or typical body weight. The advice draws from experts and the 30-year career of co-author Dr. Blackburn, associate director of the division of nutrition, Harvard Medical School. The result is a lifestyle plan that extends beyond recommendations about eating and exercising. For example, readers learn how careful time management, getting a good night's sleep, and mitigating stress can foster more effective, lasting weight loss. They also discover the importance of weighing themselves daily and a simple journaling technique to track their habits. Julie Corliss is a UC Santa Cruz graduate who has worked as a writer and public affairs specialist at the National Cancer Institute, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. For eight years she was a staff medical writer for *Health News*. She currently works as a senior medical editor for *Harvard Health Publications*. Contact Corliss at Julie_corliss@gmail.com. Website for the book is www.breakthroughsetpoint.com/index.html.

***The Universe in a Mirrror: The Saga of the Hubble Space Telescope and the Visionaries Who Built It* by Robert Zimmerman (NASW), published by Princeton University Press.**

After World War II, astronomer Lyman Spitzer and a handful of scientists waged a 50-year struggle to build the first space telescope capable of seeing beyond Earth's atmospheric veil. The book tells the epic and sometimes heartbreaking tale of the Hubble Space Telescope, considered by many to be one of the most successful and important scientific instrument ever put into space. "Not only has Hubble reshaped the field of astronomy," says author Robert Zimmerman, a Maryland freelance, "it has completely changed the human perception of the universe." Zimmerman shows how many of the telescope's advocates sacrificed careers and family to get it launched, and how others devoted their lives to Hubble only to have their hopes and reputations shattered when its mirror was found to be flawed. This is the story of an idea that would not die—and of the dauntless human spirit. Illustrated with striking color images, *The Universe in a Mirror* describes the heated battles between scientists and bureaucrats, the perseverance of astronauts to repair and maintain the telescope, and much more. Hubble, and the men and women behind it, opened a rare window onto the universe, dazzling humanity with sights never before seen. More information about the book at http://press.princeton.edu/titles/8618.html. Zimmerman's web page http://members.bellatlantic.net/~vze3cxxp/zimbib.htm. His phone is 301-937-0394. The book's publicist is Kathryn Rosko at Kathryn_Rosko@press.princeton.edu.

***The Score: How The Quest For Sex Has Shaped The Modern Man* by Faye Flam (NASW), published by Penguin Group.**

Beginning with a "boot camp" for wannabe pickup artists—where men pay thousands of dollars for three days of classroom seminars on how to get women into bed—Flam's quest for a deeper understanding of men takes her back through the evolutionary history of the human male. By placing the human male in the context of the natural world, Flam highlights some intriguing resemblances among males of all species, but also the unique challenges that men face when courting women—whether for a lifelong partnership or a one-night stand. Flam ultimately reveals that millions of years of evolution have left the love lives of humans suspended somewhere between monogamy and promiscuity, and that it is this eons-old tension between males and females that has created the modern man. Flam has been covering science for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* since 1995. In June 2005, she started writing "Carnal Knowledge," a weekly column about the science of sex. She has also written for *New Scientist*, *Science*, and *The Economist*, and her search for a good science story has taken her everywhere from the South Pole to Greenland to NASA's zero-g plane. Members can reach her at fflam@phillynews.com or through her website www.fayeflam.com. Press representative is Anne Kosmoski at Anne.Kosmoski@us.penguingroup.com.

***Rene Dubos, Friend of the Good Earth* by Carol Moberg (NASW), published by ASM Press.**

Moberg, a faculty member of Rockefeller University, assisted Dubos in the last decades of his career while he wrote his major works on the environment. She has written a biography of his life from his birth in 1901 to his death in 1982. She presents his science in the context of 20th century biology, medicine, and ecology. She describes the ecological approach that led to his discovery of the first antibiotic and was the foundation for his career as a medical scientist and environmentalist. "Dobus," writes Moberg, "raised issues such as antibiotic resistance, the interrelatedness of environmental health to human health, and the potential danger of relying too heavily of vaccines and drugs to eradicate disease, continue to be provocative and increasingly relevant today. Dubos coined the popular motto: 'Think Globally, Act Locally.'" Moberg can be reached at moberg@rockefller.edu. The press representative for the book is Jennifer Adelman at 202-942-9316 or jadelman@asmusa.org. ■

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.

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AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR CELL BIOLOGY 48TH ANNUAL MEETING

Dec. 13-17, 2008
Moscone Center, San Francisco

Latest research on genomic instability and cancer, cell migration and cancer metastasis, cell nucleus organization in disease, stress responses, induced pluripotent stem cells, and chromatin organization and gene expression. Also not to be missed: "CellSlam 2008: The SF Shout-Out," designed to refute the notion that scientists can't be funny.

For press credentials: www.ascb.org/ascbsec/press.cfm.

ATOMS TO ECOSYSTEMS WORKSHOP FOR JOURNALISTS

A one-day workshop on nano-to-macro scale processes that govern environmental contaminants. Arsenic and mercury have been in the press in stories about arsenic poisoning in Bangladesh and the dangers of consuming fish containing methylmercury. This workshop focuses on the latest findings of the Stanford Environmental Molecular Science Institute's research on these contaminants with the cycling of water. Friday, Oct. 24, 2008 at Stanford University. FREE with housing stipend.

More Info: http://emsi.stanford.edu/journalist.html or saltzman@stanford.edu.

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SEPTEMBER 1, 2008