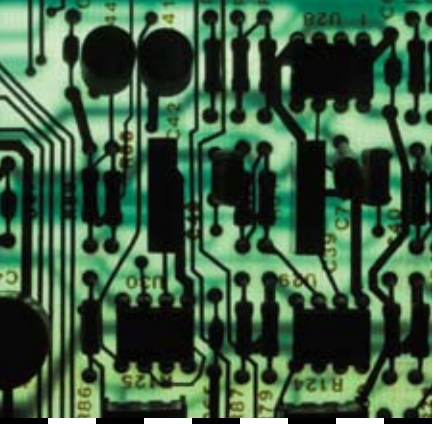

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National Association of Science Writers, Inc.

Summer 2010

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CONFLICTS
OF INTEREST IN NONPROFIT JOURNALISM

FLORIDA
GRAD PROGRAM

WORKSHOPS FOR LATIN AMERICAN
JOURNALISTS

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Editor
Lynne Friedmann

Editorial Board
Robert Lee Hotz
Paul Raeburn
Deborah Blum

Proofreader
Judith Schwartz

Design
Carol Kerr Graphic Design
www.carolkerr.com

Advertising
Tinsley Davis
510-647-9500
director@nasw.org

NASW Policy
Mariette DiChristina
dichristin@aol.com

Editorial Submissions
Lynne Friedmann
P.O. Box 1725
Solana Beach, CA 92075
editor@nasw.org

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National Association of SCIENCE WRITERS
EST. 1934

P.O. Box 7905
Berkeley, CA 94707
Phone 510-647-9500
www.nasw.org

Executive Director
Tinsley Davis
director@nasw.org

President
Mariette DiChristina
Scientific American

Vice President
Nancy Shute
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Treasurer
Peggy Girshman
Kaiser Health News

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Ron Winslow
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From The Editor

It's that time of year when we break from our routine to take advantage of the summer season. In addition to soaking up the sun, a number of science writers are also soaking up new skill sets courtesy of two rounds of NASW career development grants.

The announcement of the latest grants triggered my curiosity about the experiences and outcomes of the initial awards. E-mails and phone calls to recipients netted enthusiastic responses about new skills leading to career opportunities (both targeted and unexpected). The response is summed up best by freelance writer Erica Gies, who wrote: "Thank you NASW for believing in me and helping me to make this exciting step in my career." Her story and that of several other grantees appear in this issue.

Read also about Latin American journalists retooling for today's reporting challenges through an innovative series of workshops offered under the auspices of the Institutes of the Americas, in La Jolla, Calif.

And, Paul Raeburn shares his thoughts as he embarks on creating a new graduate science-writing program at Florida Atlantic University. He welcomes NASW member input on how to prepare students for today's journalism—and tomorrow's.

Enjoy your summer.

Lynne Friedmann

In This Issue

FRIEDMANN COURTESY OF KEN JACQUES; WORKSHOP BY LUIS J. JIMENEZ

The Hands That Feed

Managing Conflicts of Interest in the Era of Nonprofit Journalism

The need to manage real and perceived conflicts of interest, and the self-censorship that can accompany them, has always been a part of journalism, whether it was a question of angering a major advertiser or exposing the shady dealings of the publisher's golf buddy. With the emergence of nonprofit news outlets, from ProPublica to the St. Louis Beacon*, the delicate dance that managing these risks often entails gets a bit more complicated.*

Unlike a traditional newsroom, which never has just one advertiser supporting it, these nonprofit outlets tend to rely—at least initially—on a single funder or small handful of funders. And while a typical advertiser's interests are fairly easy to discern, foundations (and universities, which are part of the nonprofit equation in some cases) are invested—directly and otherwise—in a range of issues and policies, not all of which are immediately obvious. This last bit is further complicated by the fact that in recent years foundations have shifted away from general-operating grants—basically a lump sum for the grantee to use as it sees fit—to targeted grants for projects that align with the foundation's specific interests.

Columbia Journalism Review relies on foundation support, so we know something of the challenge these newsrooms face. We've had our credibility impugned based on who funds us, and we often wrestle with whether and how our editorial goals fit with the interests of potential funders. Managing this challenge is not always simple or easy.

Ultimately, your credibility will be judged based on the work you produce. But that doesn't mean there isn't a need to think these things through. "This is a precarious moment," says Charles Lewis, who was a pioneer of nonprofit journalism when he founded the Center for Public Integrity in 1989. "It is a noisy, experimental time, and it is important to set clear standards."

Andy Hall and his colleagues at the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism are attempting to do just that. On April 30, at a conference in Madison sponsored by the Center for Journalism Ethics at the University of Wisconsin, they presented a list of best practices for managing conflict-of-interest risks in nonprofit newsrooms. (The full document is available at **www.journalismethics.info/2010_roundtable_report.pdf**.)

Here are highlights from their list:

- Diversify the revenue stream, both in terms of the number of funders and their ideological bent.
- Be clear about the mission, so that funders understand what they are supporting. "We had one major foundation turn us down because they were looking for specific public-policy outcomes," says Hall. "They realized they couldn't attach those strings to us."
- Proximity matters. The closer the funder is, physically, to the news outlet it funds, the more complicated the relationship. Hall likens it to the situation that small-town newspapers have always faced, in which the biggest advertiser may live next door to the editor.
- Transparency—real transparency, not just the rhetoric of it—about where the money comes from is crucial.

> ***It is a noisy, experimental time, and it is important to set clear standards.***

Hall, a veteran investigative reporter who started the center in 2008, describes the list as a working document that will evolve. At the other end of the equation, we encourage foundations to be sensitive to the needs of accountability journalism. In other words, don't get in this game if you are simply looking for a platform for your ideas; get in it because you believe in the centrality of independent journalism to a free society.

Whether nonprofit newsrooms will be a significant part of the future of journalism in this country, or just a bridge to something else, they are a promising development in the effort to sustain serious reporting. We hope they are here to stay, part of a mix of funding models, both nonprofit and market-based, to take root. But as they evolve, they need to sweat the details. Journalists—even those in nonprofit newsrooms—are still nothing without their credibility. ■

The Hands That Feed: Managing conflicts of interest in the era of nonprofit journalism (editorial), Columbia Journalism Review, *May/June 2010.*

ABOVE Jorge Meneses, president of the San Diego chapter of the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute, talks about the Haiti, Chile, and Mexico earthquakes.

Specialized Workshops Benefit Latin American Journalists

BY LYNNE T. FRIEDMANN

In May, disaster struck twice in Guatemala. A day after the government declared a "state of calamity" following a spectacular eruption of the Pacaya volcano, deadly tropical storm Agatha bore down on the Central American nation. Journalist Tulio Diaz was uniquely qualified to bring the news to his countrymen. Just weeks prior, he had attended a five-day workshop in La Jolla, Calif., specifically designed for Latin American journalists, on covering natural disasters.

During the workshop, journalists from eight countries in Latin America heard from geologists, scientists, physicians, and other earthquake experts about responding to a crisis, with special emphasis on new technologies that provide real-time reporting for international audiences.

The training was offered by the Institute of the Americas (IOA), a 25-year-old nonprofit organization located on the campus of the University of California, San Diego. Under the leadership of Jeffrey Davidow, a former U.S. Ambassador to Mexico and Venezuela, IOA has a reach in 35 countries throughout the hemisphere and is in the vanguard of U.S.–Canada–Latin America cooperation in energy, climate change, and clean-technology development.

In recent years, the number of IOA professional journalism workshop offerings has increased significantly under the direction of veteran newspaper journalist S. Lynne Walker, who joined the institute in 2008 after serving 15 years as the Copley News Service bureau chief in Mexico City.

"Latin American journalists use the word 'hunger' for professional training," she said. "Like every journalist in the world, they want to tell their stories better and more effectively. Coming to the institute was an opportunity to expand beyond what I was doing on Mexico, Central America, and Cuba."

Journalists attending a workshop on natural disasters interview experts, such as Jorge Restrepo, a UC San Diego engineering professor with the Jacobs School of Engineering.

One of Walker's goals is to capitalize on IOA's strategic location, just 30 miles from the U.S.–Mexico border. With that in mind, the first workshop she organized was The Migration of HIV/AIDS, which included cross-border visits to medical clinics in Tijuana, Baja Mexico.

A successful outcome of that effort was participant Erika Cebreros, associate editor of the San Francisco weekly newspaper *El Mensajero*, receiving a Northern California Ethnic Media Award for a series of stories based on interviews she conducted during the workshop.

Among other programs Walker has developed are: Freedom of Expression and the Rights of Journalists in Latin America, Covering Natural Disasters, Pandemic Preparedness, Climate Change, Cross-

PHOTOS BY LUIS J. JIMENEZ

LYNNE T. FRIEDMANN IS THE EDITOR OF *SCIENCEWRITERS*.

LEFT Eric Frost, director of the Visualization Laboratory at San Diego State University, explains new technologies that help scientists predict and understand climate changes.

RIGHT Journalist Ines Nogueiras interviews a staff member at Los Angeles Pierce College as part of a digital-reporting workshop.

BELOW Institute of the Americas vice president S. Lynne Walker (left) talks with Latin American journalists receiving digital reporting training.

Border Investigative Journalism, and Digital Reporting. The workshops are conducted in Spanish, filling a niche in the region.

The Digital Reporting workshop included classroom instruction and field visits designed to provide journalists from 10 countries in the Western Hemisphere with new tools for reporting and producing video, audio, and photographic reports for their online publications.

After completing the training, a journalist from Nuevo Laredo, Mexico redesigned his news organization's website; two Colombian journalists returned to Bogota intent on organizing an association of young journalists who are making the transition from print to digital reporting; and a Venezuelan journalist held his own digital-reporting workshop in Caracas to share what he had learned with his newspaper colleagues.

Latin American journalists use the word "hunger" for professional training…

"We also have journalism professors join us at these workshops," said Walker. "This gives us a multiplier effect. They take what they learn back to their students."

According to workshop attendee Sergio Rene de Dios Corona, a journalism professor at the University of Guadalajara: "The institute has all the necessary elements to promote good journalism in our countries, for the betterment of justice, democracy, human rights, and something even more fundamental—the right of people to be informed and to know what is happening in their respective countries."

Sponsorship for journalists to attend IOA workshop comes primarily from home-country embassies, some newspapers support, and private corporations. It often falls short of satisfying the training need. And, while workshops on the IOA campus have much to offer journalists, Walker concedes it is expensive to get to La Jolla.

"This, by its very nature, limits the number who can come," she said. "The next step is to go out into the region."

Taking that next step, Walker recently conducted a journalism workshop in Bolivia.

This year marks the 7th Jack F. Ealy Workshop on Science Journalism. To date, upwards of 150 Latin American journalists have participated in this IOA program instructed by leading scientists from UC San Diego, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, and The Salk Institute, among others. In addition to access to cutting-edge research, participants build a network of contacts in the region, and receive a solid grounding on a variety of green issues. A strong emphasis this year is climate change and its effects in Latin America; making global issues understandable and relevant at a local level; and a special panel discussion on the Gulf oil spill.

[NASW members who have participated in Ealy workshops as speakers and trainers include Kim McDonald, Jim Cornell, Jon Cohen, and yours truly, with simultaneous translations for those of us who are not proficient Spanish speakers.]

Nicolás Luco, former science and technology editor for the Santiago, Chile newspaper *El Mercurio* has sent two reporters to prior Ealy workshops.

"As an editor, I must say they returned reverberating enthusiasm, thrilled at having been exposed to top science labs and scientists and delighted with the colleagues they met," he said. "The journalists gained in experience, contacts and, mostly, in outlook. Thenceforth, they took more risks in reaching out internationally; a great plus in their publishing." ■

The journalists gained in experience, contacts, and, mostly, in outlook.

Journalists learn to build slideshows in a computer lab at Los Angeles Pierce College.

Creating a Graduate Science-Writing Program in Florida

by Paul Raeburn

Beginning this fall, I'll be creating a new graduate program in science writing at Florida Atlantic University, in Jupiter. Fla., just north of West Palm Beach. And although I haven't yet told him this, I owe the job, at least in part, to Dave Perlman.

A few years ago, Dave was scheduled to speak at the annual Scripps Howard Institute on the Environment at FAU, a kind of boot camp for environmental writers. At the last minute, Dave couldn't make it, and I got a slightly frantic call asking whether I could fill in. On that trip, I met the folks who would later approach me about starting a science-writing program at FAU.

FAU has 28,000 students on seven campuses strung along the Atlantic coast. The Jupiter campus houses the university's honors college and its environmental studies center. Interestingly, it is also becoming the hub of an international cluster of scientific institutions. Immediately adjacent to the campus are Scripps Florida, the eastern outpost of The Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, Calif., and the Max Planck Florida Institute, part of the Max Planck Society of Germany—and the only such facility in North America. FAU is also active in oceanography and marine biology at its nearby Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute and ocean engineering at SeaTech, in Dania Beach.

With all that science going on, Manjunath Pendakur, dean of the College of Arts and Letters, and Susan Reilly, director of the School of Communication and Multimedia Studies, thought it made sense to establish a science-writing program, to take advantage of that talent.

And that's what we plan to do. I'll be developing the program over the coming year with the help of Pendakur, Reilly, and Gary Perry, the dean of the College of Science, who is also supporting the program. Collaborations will be established with researchers at Scripps and Max Planck, and with science and communications faculty at the university. Some of you may know Neil Santaniello, a long-time environmental writer for the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, who teaches environmental writing at FAU. He will be teaching in the program as well as helping with program development.

Working closely with the university's extensive multimedia studies program, as we try to prepare journalists for today's journalism—and tomorrow's. If the word "newspaper" is never spoken in my classes, that will be fine with me. The program's focus will

GRAD PROGRAM continued on page 32

Paul Raeburn is a journalist, blogger at the Knight Science Journalism Tracker, and the author of *Do Fathers Matter?* to be published by Simon & Schuster in 2012.

The Sweet Success of Career Development Grants

by Lynne T. Friedmann

NASW continues to award career development grants to support education, training, or other activities intended to help established science writers continue or advance in today's rapidly changing media environment. The grants, which reimburse individuals up to $2,500 for proposed activities, are supported by funds that NASW receives from the Authors Coalition of America, which distributes royalties on U.S. copyrights collected overseas.

SECOND ROUND GRANTS AWARDED

The current round of funding attracted 36 applicants with requests totaling $68,500, once again far exceeding the $25,000 available. Faced with many more worthy proposals than could be funded, awards were based on how effectively projects would meet the specific challenges facing the applicants and how well they fit the applicant's background, experience, abilities, and goals.

Congratulations to:

Christie Aschwanden, freelance writer, $2,200 for organizing a seminar for writers on coping with the changing media environment

Erika Beras, behavioral health reporter, WDUQ 90.5FM, $2,500 for radio equipment to facilitate freelance work

Nancy Marie Brown, freelance writer, $1,300 to attend Chatauqua Conference on children's writing

Christine Buckley, media relations associate, University of Connecticut, $2,088 for multimedia training

Jennie Dusheck, freelance writer, $780 for travel to pursue development of a website on evolution

Fred Gebhart, freelance writer, $2,500 for courses in regulatory affairs

Mary King Hoff, freelance writer, $1,500 for online digital media courses

Karen Hoffman, freelance writer, $200 for online course in how to pitch magazine articles

Roxanne Khamsi, senior news editor, *Nature Medicine*, $1,119 for multimedia equipment

David M. Lawrence, freelance writer, $2,495 for photography and audio equipment

David Levine, freelance writer, $570 for a grant-writing workshop

Laura V. Lombardi, science writer, European Space Agency, $328 for online astronomy courses

Betsy Mason, science editor, Wired.com, $1,257 for digital photography courses

Fenella Saunders, senior editor, *American Scientist*, $2,490 for Knight Digital Media Center multimedia bootcamp

Laurie J. Schmidt, freelance writer, $1,600 to attend IEEE Geoscience and Remote Sensing Society (IGARSS) symposium

Cheryl Platzman Weinstock, freelance writer, $2,250 for "The Backpack Journalist" training at Poynter Institute

IMPACT OF FIRST ROUND GRANTS

"Thank you NASW for believing in me and helping me to make this exciting step in my career."

That statement by science writer **Erica Gies** echoes the sentiments of 16 science writers who received NASW career development grants in 2009.

Gies has been a print freelance for five years. In an effort to maximize her adaptability to rapid changes in journalism, last year she began an internship at a local public radio station in order to push herself writing for another medium.

Gies used NASW funding to travel to Guyana to report on innovative approaches to climate change and sustainable development for NPR's "The World" and the *International Herald Tribune*. She interviewed Guyana's president, prime minister, and the minister of foreign affairs as well as its major indigenous leader and a host of other Guyanese.

"That experience built my confidence in all areas of my work, from pitching editors to conducting interviews with VIPs to using new technology," Gies said. "The NASW grant was critical to making this trip possible."

Barbara Moran used grant funding to hire a sound engineer who advised her on the purchase of sound-recording gear and then taught her how to properly use it.

"It has been a great boon to my reporting," she said.

Moran is now exploring an oral history project to accompany her next book.

"This new gear, and the skills to use it, makes the idea plausible," Morgan said.

A training course in Final Cut Pro allowed grant recipient **David Taylor** to advance from "toying with" editing software to producing his own webcasts. This new-found knowledge also formed the basis for a documentary workshop he developed for The Writer's Center, in Bethesda, Md.

Taylor also increased his knowledge base by attending the Society of Environmental Journalists conference in Madison using NASW funds. A roundtable discussion with U.S. cabinet leaders gave him starting points for a policy article on green chemistry and the context for ongoing work.

And, the remainder of Taylor's grant supported a trip to Colorado where he visited the National Renewable Energy Lab for an inside look at solar photovoltaic technology.

"I saw NREL amid renewed federal commitment to its research and a new lab where companies test commercial scale-up of solar materials and processes," he said. "That yielded an article in *Environmental Health Perspectives*."

In Denver, Taylor attended the New Energy Forum where energy startups hone their investment pitches before a panel of judges, a la "American Idol." *Forbes Asia* welcomed Taylor's pitch for a story stemming from that experience.

GRANTS continued on page 32

THIRD ROUND SLATED

Given the high level of member interest, NASW plans to offer a third round of career development grants. An e-mail announcement will be sent to members with proposal instructions and the application deadline date. ■

Lynne T. Friedmann is the editor of *ScienceWriters*.

Will You Be E-Mailing This Column? It's Awesome

By John Tierney

Sociologists have developed elaborate theories of who spreads gossip and news—who tells whom, who matters most in social networks—but they've had less success measuring what kind of information travels fastest. Do people prefer to spread good news or bad news? Would we rather scandalize or enlighten? Which stories do social creatures want to share, and why?

Now some answers are emerging thanks to a rich new source of data: you, Dear Reader.

Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania have intensively studied the *New York Times* list of most-e-mailed articles, checking it every 15 minutes for more than six months, analyzing the content of thousands of articles and controlling for factors like the placement in the paper or on the web home page.

The results are surprising—well, to me, anyway. I would have hypothesized that there are two basic strategies for making the most-e-mailed list. One, which I've happily employed, is to write anything about sex. The other, which I'm still working on, is to write an article headlined: "How Your Pet's Diet Threatens Your Marriage, and Why It's Bush's Fault."

...readers wanted to share articles that inspired awe...

But it turns out that readers have more exalted tastes, according to the Penn researchers, Jonah Berger and Katherine A. Milkman. People preferred e-mailing articles with positive rather than negative themes, and they liked to send long articles on intellectually challenging topics.

Perhaps most of all, readers wanted to share articles that inspired awe, an emotion that the researchers investigated after noticing how many science articles made the list. In general, they found, 20 percent of articles that appeared on the *Times* home page made the list, but the rate rose to 30 percent for science articles, including ones with headlines like "The Promise and Power of RNA." (I swear, the science staff did nothing to instigate this study, but we definitely don't mind publicizing the results.)

"Science kept doing better than we expected," said Dr. Berger, a social psychologist and a professor of marketing at Penn's Wharton School. "We anticipated that people would share articles with practical information about health or gadgets, and they did, but they also sent articles about paleontology and cosmology. You'd see articles shooting up the list that were about the optics of deer vision."

To make sense of these trends in "virality," the Penn researchers tracked more than 7,500 articles published from August 2008 to February 2009. They assessed each article's popularity after controlling for factors like the time of day it was published online, the section in which it appeared, and how much promotion it received on the web home page.

A random sample of 3,000 of these articles was rated by independent readers for qualities like providing practical value or being surprising. The researchers also used computer algorithms to track the ratio of emotional words in an article and to assess the relative positivity or negativity.

The computer textual analysis could identify "affect-laden" articles like "Redefining Depression as Mere Sadness" or "When All Else Fails, Blaming the Patient Often Comes Next." It distinguished positive articles like "Wide-Eyed New Arrivals Falling in Love With the City" from downers like "Germany: Baby Polar Bear's Feeder Dies."

More emotional stories were more likely to be e-mailed, the researchers found, and positive articles were shared more than negative ones. Longer articles generally did better than shorter articles, although Dr. Berger said that might just be because the longer articles were about more engaging topics. (The best way to test that, he said, would be for the *Times* to run shorter and longer versions of the same article that would be seen by different readers.)

Surprising articles, like one about free-

E-MAILING continued on page 33

John Tierney is a *New York Times* columnist who writes on science and technology, economics and environmental controversies.

ILLUSTRATION BY CAROL KERR GRAPHIC DESIGN

Q&A

Self-Employment Taxes for Freelancers

By Julian Block

Question: *I'm a freelance writer and photographer. I've been told to report my book and photo royalties not as income on Form 1040's Schedule C (Profit or Loss From Business), but as royalties on Schedule E. The word is that by doing so, I can skip paying the 15.3 percent self-employment tax, which consists of 2.9 percent Medicare and 12.4 percent Social Security. True?*
Answer: The Internal Revenue Service looks unkindly on writers, photographers, artists, and other self-employed persons who try to escape self-employment taxes. Perhaps we have a case of semantics here. Yes, the word "royalties" is used on Schedule E, and yes, the IRS defines royalties as "payments for intangible properties"—for example, books and artistic works, which would include photos.

But the IRS is adamant that you report royalties for your creative efforts on Schedule C, making that income subject to self-employment tax. Schedule E is for reporting royalties received by *other* people—for example, those who purchase or inherit copyrights on books, photos, and other material that they didn't create. Limit your use of Schedule E for reporting royalties to listing those received from coal, oil, or gas sites.

You're playing the "audit lottery" if you report book and photo sales on Schedule E. True, your ploy might never be discovered, but should it be, expect to be hit with a hefty bill for back taxes, interest, and penalties.

Question: *Who's right? I've office furniture and machines that I no longer use in my business as a writer and consultant. Over the years, I claimed depreciation deductions on Schedule C that have reduced my tax basis in the equipment to zero. My tax adviser says that I can donate these items to a charitable organization and take a contribution deduction for their current market value. However, my mother-in-law insists that I'm not entitled to any deduction because I fully depreciated them.*
Answer: She's right on the money. Unfortunately, you're not allowed any deduction. As the equipment's basis is zero, there's nothing of value for you to write off as a deduction.

Question: *How can business owners keep track of all the federal deadlines for filing returns and sending in quarterly estimated tax payments?*
Answer: One way is to ask the IRS for its Publication 509, "Tax Calendar." While you're at it, ask for Publication 910, *Guide to Free Tax Services*, which lists all of the agency's booklets. Get free copies of the booklets by calling 1-800-TAX-FORM (they'll be mailed to you), or download copies from the IRS website (**www.irs.gov**).

Question: *A university asked to reprint one of my magazine articles in its alumni publication. I gave permission without asking for any payment. Since this is an educational institution, can I take a charitable contribution deduction equal to the fee I would have asked of a commercial publisher? Do I need a letter from the school? If so, what should it say?*
Answer: Sorry, a letter won't help. You're not allowed any deduction. ■

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.

This observation from head tracker Charlie Petit at the Knight Science Journalism Tracker http://ksjtracker.mit.edu/

I like Bill Nye just fine. He's entertaining and provides himself a good living and the public a good service by making science easily comprehensible. He's a serious man at heart, I'd wager. But really (*really?*), is he the best that a major media outlet can do when it comes to explaining something as simple as buoyancy and density and how a "top kill" uses heavy mud to change the density of the column in that pipe from the oil zone deep in the Gulf to the busted top so that it's so heavy it doesn't bubble out any more?

Top Kill Explained. By Bill Nye The Science Guy? *Is that what you got, CNN?*

Here, courtesy of *New York Magazine*, is CNN's John King's broadcast where he calls on Nye (**http://bit.ly/bFQpWU**). It's clear enough, no knock on Nye who gets into hysteresis and has some good show-and-tell props. But again—this huge network, struggling to keep up with the opinionating talkers on MSNBC and Fox by operating a more or less objective news shop, has nobody on staff able to handle routine, if technical, reporting of this sort? How in blazes did that happen?

Oh yeah, I just remembered. Well that's a lie. I wrote this because I remembered it first and then wrote the post. Either way—how wise does it look now, CNN suits, to have given the boot to the likes of Miles O'Brien and other reporters who didn't run gibbering in baffled panic from a few technical and scientific concepts? (*Columbia Journalism Review*, **http://bit.ly/iQsH**)

In the meantime, the biggest story lately in environmental disasters is the Gulf oil spill (that is, biggest story one can nail down to a single place, mood, and comes with a specific perpetrator. The collapse of world fisheries, the warming of the world, the drought in North Africa, the perma-defrosting Arctic, and others are bigger—just more diffuse and deniable). ■

Featured Column

Scholarly Pursuits

Academic research relevant to the workaday world of science writing

by Rick Borchelt

Big Science, Little Releases

Science may be increasingly multi-institutional and involve a number of research partners, but the news releases are still home-grown affairs.

■ ■ ■

Graube, M., F. Clark, and D. L. Illman (2010). Coverage of Team Science by Public Information Officers: Content Analysis of Press Releases About the National Science Foundation Science and Technology Centers. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* 40(2): 143-159.

In the not-so-distant past, most federal and other research grants supported one principal investigator and a handful of graduate students and postdocs, the so-called individual investigator model. Increasingly, however—at NSF, DOE, NIH, and elsewhere—science has become a grand collaboration involving multiple institutions and many researchers, each of whom has some part to play in the overall research enterprise the agency has chosen to fund. The greater commitment of federal research investments in what many scholars call "Big Science" also requires multiple research actors, often at far-flung institutions.

One might assume that news releases from these partner organizations—to be fair and balanced—would give due credit to the other researchers in the project, if not to the agency that made the research possible. One would be wrong, Graube and colleagues have found.

One of the early models for this kind of research is NSF's Science and Technology Centers (STCs), which fund joint research projects conducted by a few to a few dozen collaborating scientists and institutions. Graube et al. looked at a 2006 snapshot of news releases from 14 of the 17 centers during the study period—68 news releases in all—to figure out the extent to which PIOs involved or even mentioned other institutions or other researchers in releases issued from their home institutions.

The great majority (60 percent) of the releases were about research findings; a smaller but still significant 16 percent tracked some kind of institutional announcement, like a founding or grant award. Despite the fact that STC funds also fund non-research work, and funds them well, the percentage of releases about education, diversity enhancement, and knowledge transfer all fell in the single digits. "While it is apparent, based on an extensive analysis of the centers' websites and annual reports and through extensive interviews of center personnel by one of the authors, that knowledge transfer, educational, and diversity enhancement initiatives are taking place to a considerable degree and with significant levels of funding, the picture portrayed to the world, including to journalists, does not reflect the level of activity and investment at STCs in these broader mission elements," Graube et al. write.

…a quarter or more of (news) releases never mentioned the funding agency or the funding program.

About three-quarters of the time, the team found, the release mentioned the name of the center at the institution, about the same percent as mentioned NSF. The STC program itself fared less well, getting play in fewer than half the releases. The upshot here, of course, is that a quarter or more of the releases never mentioned the

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

Rick Borchelt is director of communications in the USDA Office of Research, Education, and Economics.

funding agency or the funding program. Of the releases that mentioned NSF or STC, though, some 13 percent had an error in the name or acronym of the center or the STC program. Imagine explaining that to the program officer!

PIOs also seemed to deliberately lowball the involvement of other researchers and portrayed the research only from the angle of their own institutions. Joint releases were very rare, comprising only about 13 percent of the total.

"The net effect is to highlight the single institution, single research stories, and to de-emphasize inter-institutional cooperation among center partners," they conclude. "It is possible that competition for research dollars among universities and research institutions is one contributing factor."

Gee. You think?

"The way that news originating from STCs is identified and reported to the world affects the extent to which team-mode research is visible to journalists and the public," the authors write. "When two or more center partners issue joint press releases under the banners of the involved organizations and/or with contact information from the partners, this signifies to journalists and to the world that the news has resulted from a team effort and the partners together share 'ownership' of the results. A jointly issued release helps to frame the story as an outcome of 'team science.'"

■ ■ ■

Tarnoczi, T.J. and F. Berkes (2010). Sources of Information for Farmers' Adaptation Practices in Canada's Prairie Agro-Ecosystem. *Climatic Change* 98: 200-305.

One of the regular justifications of quality science writing in contemporary society is that it helps people make sense of science and technology issues that affect their daily lives. If there is a population where the need to make critical decisions about an emerging issue in science is manifestly evident, it's the impact of climate change on farmers and agriculture workers.

Tarnoczi and Berkes explore how farmers and ranchers seek, find, and use information about climate change. Their focus is the Canadian prairie provinces—the Canadian "breadbasket"—but could be generalizable to a wide range of lay publics whose livelihoods are affected by socio-scientific issues. Long term, the climate change prognosis for the Canadian provinces calls for warmer temperatures and greater aridity; currently, farmers there are experiencing increasing weather uncertainty and variability, and more frequent extreme weather events including droughts and floods, the authors note. In coping with this climatic uncertainty, do farmers find the media supplying them with information they need to preserve their livelihoods and productivity?

Farmers commonly cited media for providing information regarding tillage and organic farming…

In semi-structured interviews with 28 farmers in Alberta and Manitoba, the authors found that social sources and personal experience—not media coverage—was the most common source for information regarding the practices (cited a total 90 times in the interviews). Government was the second most common source of information, followed by industry, producer and conservation organizations (cited 80, 77, and 60 times respectively). Media came in dead last, cited 54 times.

"Farmers commonly cited media for providing information regarding tillage and organic farming," they found. "However, for the most part the information was written for a broad audience and did not contain applicable locally specific material important for adaptation practices."

Part of the issue with media information was farmers' interest in direct observation before making a decision about new technologies to adopt or innovations to emulate. "Information that was observable or experiential was more significant for the adoption of new practices." Tarnoczi and Berkes explained. "For example, farmers claimed to be more willing to try conservation tillage techniques after seeing a neighbor succeed with the practice, even when they already had prior information on it. Experiential knowledge was obtained through observation of the benefits or costs of new practices incurred by neighbors, trials with new equipment, and field demonstrations."

Media available currently to farmers just can't reproduce this "tire-kicking" approach, but could be part of a multimedia approach including face-to-face interaction.

■ ■ ■

Smith, K. C., R. F. Singer, and E. E. Kromm (2009). Getting Cancer Research Into the News: A Communication Case Study Centered on One U.S. Comprehensive Cancer Center. *Science Communication* OnlineFirst, published online in advance of publication Dec. 30, 2009.

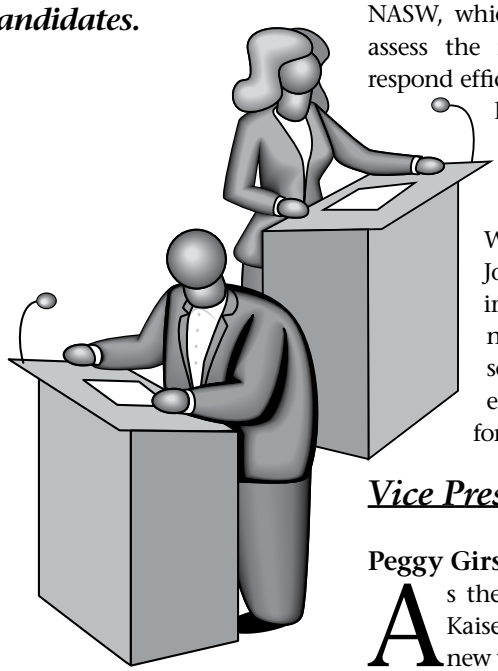
Very few research studies have looked at the construction of science news from the perspective of how scientists and research managers understand or value public communication about their work, Smith et al.

SCHOLARLY continued on page 33

…only by understanding news coverage of cancer research as a social construct negotiated between scientists, PIOs, and the media can one actually make sense of what the public learns…

NASW Board Election Candidate Statements

Election of the 2011-2012 NASW board takes place this year at a special meeting of the association. (See page 14 for date, time, location as well as proxy information.) In addition to electing four officers, the board consists of 11 members at large. The nominating committee has assembled an outstanding slate of candidates.



President Candidate

Nancy Shute (freelance)

I'm a freelance editor and writer, as well as a contributing editor for *U.S. News & World Report*, where I worked for 12 years as a senior writer and assistant managing editor in charge of science and technology coverage. In my latest metamorphosis, I'm now blogging, podcasting, and training journalists and scientists in effective use of social media, while trying to figure all this out myself. I've worked as a small-town newspaper and television reporter in Idaho, a political reporter in Washington, D.C., and a freelance contributor to many newspapers and magazines, including *Outside*, *Health*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *Smithsonian*. In the early 1990s, on a Fulbright, I founded the first bilingual newspaper in Kamchatka, Russia.

In the next two years, I plan to continue our work developing programs and services that will help NASW members adapt and thrive in a fast-changing media landscape. That includes a first-ever strategic plan for NASW, which will help the organization assess the needs of our members and respond efficiently and effectively. I'm also looking forward to working to improve the quality of science writing worldwide, as part of NASW's sponsorship of the World Conference of Science Journalists in June 2011. Most important, I want to continue to nurture our community of science writers so we can help each other build bright futures for ourselves and our craft.

Nancy Shute

Peggy Girshman

Ron Winslow

Vice President Candidate

Peggy Girshman (*Kaiser Health News*)

As the executive editor of *Online* of Kaiser Health News, I am part of a new wave of (deliberately) nonprofit journalistic ventures. We are an editorially independent program of the Kaiser Family Foundation, a health policy research organization unaffiliated with Kaiser Permanente. We cover health policy, comparative effectiveness research, health-care financing, hospitals, doctors, nurses, etc. I oversee the website and also work on partnerships; our material appears in a variety of places including *The Washington Post*, NPR, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and McClatchy Newspapers, to name a few.

Prior to this, I was executive editor of consumer publishing for *Congressional Quarterly*. Some of our stories covered environment, technology, health care, and science policy. The first 32 years of my career were spent in broadcasting. I was a managing editor at NPR News, coordinated the radio newsroom expansion into multimedia for npr.org, helped initiate the year-long "Climate Connections" series, and 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 1990's, 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 and am currently NASW treasurer.

Treasurer Candidate

Ron Winslow (*Wall Street Journal*)

I have enjoyed the past two years as NASW secretary working with other officers and board members to improve communications with the membership and to bolster efforts to expand workshops,

fellowships, and other programs for the benefit of science writers. As treasurer, I will continue to work with NASW leadership to foster a community of science writers and support members as we all seek to serve our respective audiences amid the economic and social forces buffeting our profession.

I have been a reporter and editor at the *Wall Street Journal* for 27 years, the last 20 covering health and medicine. When I joined NASW in 1990, my beat focused on health policy. Medical science is now my beat.

Secretary Candidate

Beryl Lieff Benderly (freelance)

Since 2002, when NASW joined the Authors Coalition of America through my efforts, coalition funds have supported such services as the Words' Worth database, travel fellowships, and enhanced content for the workshops, newsletter, and website. This year, as co-chair of NASW's new career development grants, I helped launch a program that has already let dozens of science writers undertake projects to adapt their careers to today's turbulent conditions. I hope that, with future coalition funds, NASW can provide that chance to many more. That's why, as NASW's 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 have also served on the board and the freelance committee and have co-chaired the Science in Society Awards. NASW honored my service with the McGurgan Award, and I was recently thrilled to be elected a fellow of AAAS for "leadership in advancing and protecting the economic and creative rights" of science writers. With seven national writing prizes, eight books, hundreds of articles, and a monthly column on *Science* magazine's website, I hope, as NASW secretary, to continue working to make NASW the most vigorous possible source of the information, education, support, and advocacy that all our members need to thrive in these challenging times.

Beryl Lieff Benderly

Karl Leif Bates

Terry Devitt

Dan Ferber

Member-at-Large Candidates

Karl Leif Bates (Duke University Research Communications)

We're in the midst of a sort of Cambrian explosion of new forms of media and interpersonal communication that I find really exciting. The core of what we do—call it the metabolism of science news—won't change. But the environment we find ourselves in already has. It's time for a little adaptation, and I think NASW should be central to that effort.

I'm optimistic that there is as much (or more) audience for science news now as ever, and that there will be many ways to make a living using our rare and precious skills to create that content. The NASW should be where we meet—online and in person—to share new ideas and teach each other as we grope our way forward. I'd like to see our little club continue to attract and nurture the best young talent and to work together to learn all sorts of great new ways to bring science to the public—and get paid for it!

I've served on the program committee for the NASW workshops for the last two years, and am on advisory boards for EurekAlert!, the University of North Carolina Medical and Science Journalism Program, and SCONC (Science Communicators of North Carolina).

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

I seek re-election to the board as I hope to continue to serve the diverse membership of our organization. Given the profound changes in our work world, NASW plays a more important role than ever. It is essential for our organization to increase opportunities for professional development and to enhance services to our membership. If re-elected, I will also continue to advocate for *all* of our members and the opportunity to contribute to the organization and its goals. As co-chair of the Internet committee and a long-time member of the education committee, I will act in strong support of these critical services for our members and for future science writers.

I am director of research communications for the University of Wisconsin, where I've covered science for 25 years. I also edit The Why Files, a popular website about science. In addition, I freelance and have 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 2007, I was elected a fellow of AAAS.

Dan Ferber (freelance)

Communicating science is as important as it ever was, despite changes in our business that have made the life of a science writer more challenging. If re-elected to the board, I'll continue to strive to help science writers thrive in our rapidly changing profession. 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'm a long-time independent science journalist, a contributing correspondent for *Science*, and a freelance magazine writer. My work has garnered several awards from journalism groups, and was anthologized in the *Best of Technology Writing 2006*. I've recently completed work on my first book, a co-authored work on the health impacts of climate change, and as a board member will draw from that experience to voice the concerns of authors and aspiring authors within NASW.

As chair of the NASW freelance committee, I spearheaded several import-

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DEVITT BY JEFF MILLER/UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON; FERBER BY LYNNE FRIEDMANN
OTHER PHOTOS COURTESY OF CANDIDATES

Member-at-Large Candidates

continued from page 11

ant initiatives to benefit every member who freelances, including Words' Worth, NASW's online database of freelance rates and contracts information. I also co-founded and chair NASW's grievance committee, which since 2006 has been helping 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 three-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 I have shepherded about 1,000 entries through the process. In 2008, I led an effort to re-examine the SIS awards. After productive discussions among board members and others, we decided to increase the number of categories to four, to make all of them (except for the book category) platform independent, and to add categories honoring commentary and opinion and local and regional science reporting. I think the new categories are working well, but I'm open to discussing future changes. I also hope to find a way outside the SIS structure to honor outstanding work from NASW members who work in public information. 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.

Deborah Franklin (freelance)

I'm a freelance science writer in San Francisco and have covered science and medicine in perhaps every medium but television. I started out in magazines, first interning at *Science News,* then working as a staff reporter and/or editor at *Science News*, *Science '86*, *Hippocrates*, *Health*, and *Fortune* magazines. In 2005 and 2006, I was one of two writers of the *New York Times*' personal health column, "The Consumer." I've freelanced feature stories for numerous magazines, including the *New York Times Magazine*, *Discover*, and *Smithsonian*. Since 2006, I've spent at least half of every year working for National Public Radio in Washington, D.C., as a radio correspondent, editor, and blogger on NPR's science desk. I look forward to working with NASW board and committee members to strengthen the ties and sharing of skills and perspective between new and long-time science writers across media and from coast to coast.

Jeff Grabmeier (Ohio State University)

In order to continue as a successful organization, NASW has to attract new, young science writers in a challenging media environment. That's one of the main reasons I am running for the board, and why I have been co-chair of the education committee since 2004. 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*.

Bob Finn

Deborah Franklin

Jeff Grabmeier

Michael Lemonick

FINN BY HAGOP PHOTOGRAPHY; MILLER © 2009 CALLIERICHMOND.COM; OTHER PHOTOS COURTESY OF CANDIDATES

I hope to bring to the board a perspective from all sides of science writing. I am currently director of research communications at Ohio State University, and write extensively about social science research. But 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.

Michael Lemonick (Climate Central)

I'll hardly be the only candidate to comment on how quickly science writing is changing, and how little anyone really knows about where it's headed. I'm convinced, however, that science writing will thrive, and that experienced science journalists have an obligation to help the profession navigate the transition.

My career has pretty much spanned the golden age of science journalism. I began writing for *Science Digest* in 1983, and then spent 21 years on the staff of *TIME*. I've also done a lot of freelance work and written four books. In 1998, I began teaching science journalism, mostly to undergraduates at Princeton, but also a handful of graduate and professional courses at Columbia, NYU, Johns Hopkins, and the Santa Fe Science Writing Workshop.

Now, after taking a package in 2007, I'm on the staff of Climate Central, in Princeton, N.J., a nonprofit-journalism organization that's exploring one possible direction science writing could follow. Will it work? Nobody really knows, but we have to try everything we can think of.

So, I have one foot in the glorious past and the other planted firmly in the slippery future. I have experience as a freelancer, a staff journalist, and a staff whatever-you-call-it-now, since nonprofit journalism is an entirely new category. I've done plenty of blogging, and am now exploring radio and short video. I also, crucially, have ongoing contact with many of the young science writers who are the ones who are actively reinventing the profession. As a result I think I'm reasonably well positioned to help guide science writers—including myself—through the transition without losing the professional values we've already established.

David Levine (freelance)

If elected to the board, I will bring the same energy and enthusiasm that I bring to my role as co-president of Science Writers in New York (SWINY).

I write about health and medicine. I have done so as a freelance writer and as a PIO for the American Cancer Society and the American Lung Association. I received my B.A. in humanities and M.A. in creative writing, both from The Johns Hopkins University.

These are challenging times for science writers. I believe that there is strength in

numbers and reputation. To retain our current members, and recruit new members, NASW must offer programs and services that are relevant to members' needs. I am glad the organization has increased its communications to member and offers career development grants. This is the right direction to go.

Although a relatively new member of NASW, I attended the regional meeting in New York City and the annual meeting in Austin. As part of the ad hoc committee that is reviewing and revising proposed changes to Article VIII of the NASW Constitution, I have been thanked for bringing a "rational and fair voice" to the group. I will do the same as a member of the NASW board.

Robin Lloyd (*Scientific American*)

I am a former NASW lurker who now enjoys and benefits from getting involved and helping out. I often focus on collaborating with NASW members to address the changing business climate for science journalism and to develop ways that contributors to both old and new media can evolve and thrive. On the NASW board, I also hope to assist in the development of best practices for new media and the representation of online journalism issues.

I have been a member of NASW for 11 years. For the past two years, I've been a member of the program committee and a Science in Society Awards judge. As a member of Science Writers in New York, I have helped to organize events on the future of social media and on ethics in science and health journalism. I also serve on the university communications council at the Stevens Institute of Technology. I have worked full time in print journalism (*Pasadena Star-News*), online journalism (ScientificAmerican.com, CNN.com, Space.com, and LiveScience.com), and wire journalism (City News Service of Los Angeles), and also held jobs in academia (assistant professor of sociology at SUNY Purchase), and institutional communications (American Museum of Natural History).

Rosie Mestel (*Los Angeles Times*)

I started out with a Ph.D. in genetics and worked as a post-doc in a fruit-fly lab before deciding to switch to science writing. After completing the UC Santa Cruz science-writing program, I interned at the *Dallas Morning News*, then worked as a researcher/reporter for *Discover* magazine. After that, I embarked on a semi-freelancing career (West Coast correspondent for *New Scientist* and a contributing editor for *Health* magazine, while writing articles for *Natural History*, *Discover*, *Earth*, and *Science*). I joined the *L.A. Times* as a staff writer in 1998, writing first for the health section and then reporting on science and medicine for the news section. I've been deputy editor for health and science for five years.

David Levine

Robin Lloyd

Rosie Mestel

Steve Miller

As someone who's freelanced, I know how hard that work can be, and try very hard to make the experience of people who write for my newspaper as decent as possible. And, as someone who's watched staff levels dwindle year after year at the *L.A. Times*, even as demands to expand and change our coverage intensify, I have had a good taste of the challenges we face in our line of work.

During my career, I've received much support from colleagues and mentors in the science-writing community. I seek election to the NASW board as a way to contribute time and energy to our community in a more formal way.

Steve Miller (freelance)

I do not classify myself as a journalist, PIO, editor, or book author although my work encompasses each of these categories. I am, however, a science writer dedicated to accurate science communication in many venues. As a freelance science writer and member of NASW since 1999, I have seen my work balance shift many times. I believe this will be typical in the future of science writing, for staff as well as freelance writers.

A primary goal of NASW should be to help members in the transition from clearly defined and focused job titles to the broad field that encompasses today's science writing, broadcasting, and webcasting. As a board member, I will focus on that goal along with NASW's traditional strengths of promoting accurate science communication, advocating for science writers, and sharing both our collective knowledge of the trade and the occasional pitcher of beer.

I have been active on the NASW education and freelance committees as well as organizing and serving on workshop panels on the business of freelancing and on writing for children. Unrelated to science writing, I have developed organizational leadership skills as a municipal elected official and as a board member of a local nature conservancy.

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Member-at-Large Candidates

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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, *The Scientist*, PLoS Biology, *BioScience*, *Washington Post*, 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.

Tabitha M. Powledge

Adam Rogers (*Wired*)

As an assigning editor at a magazine that focuses on science and technology, I've been lucky enough (in general) to have the resources required for really ambitious stories. The question is: are we as science writers producing stories that magazines like mine want to pay for?

My priority, if elected to the NASW board, will be to expand what writers can do. We need to build our social networking presence, to better exchange ideas and collaborate. We should share knowledge about publications and editors—word rates, editorial contacts, and what publications look for in a science story. And we should expand training in the use of multimedia tools as more publications (like mine) incorporate audio and video.

All of us should be working to redefine what science writers cover and how we cover it. Textured stories with narrative and context pay better, but more importantly they're what we have to deliver if we want readers to really understand health-care reform, energy policy, and all the other major stories in our portfolio.

Adam Rogers

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 (*Nature*), and even a purveyor of editorial opinion (also at *Nature*.)

M. Mitchell Waldrop

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. But I 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.

Cheryl Platzman Weinstock
(freelance)

I set up my own freelance journalism business back in 1984, before it was fashionable to hang out your own shingle. I immediately became active in NASW and hit the ground running. I helped plan NASW's 50th anniversary, spearheaded informal chats about freelance writing at meetings and in the newsletter, and joined the board. Then, I counted on the backbone of NASW's elite to guide me and promised I would, in turn, mentor others. My phone is and always has been open to anyone with questions or concerns about freelance writing. As a board member, once again I would be uniquely qualified to spearhead NASW into helping shape the future of freelance writing because I have survived being one for 26 years. I write for such flagship publications as the *New York Times*, *Glamour*, and *Woman's Day* and have garnered 17 awards in my career. I know about what it takes to help run an organization from my years on NASW's board and my recent tenure on the board of the American Society of Journalists and Authors. The future is not as glum for writers as everyone thinks. It is all about staying on top of our game and I hope to help our board strategize what else can do to help our members move to the next step of their career. ■

Cheryl Platzman Weinstock

■ ■ ■

Election Meeting Scheduled

In accordance with provisions of the NASW constitution, the election of 2011-2012 officers and board members at large will take place during a special meeting of the membership, announced earlier this summer with a special postcard mailing and e-updates. Members have the option of showing up in person from 5:30-6:30 PM at 4 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. on Monday, Aug. 9 or issuing their voting preferences quickly and easily online in the preceding weeks. ■

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CANDIDATES

BOOKS
BY AND FOR MEMBERS

Ruth Winter
44 Holly Drive, Short Hills, NJ 07078
or e-mail ruthwrite@aol.com

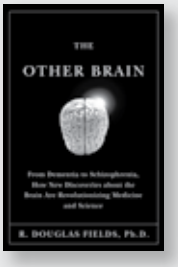
Send material about new books

Include the name of the publicist and appropriate contact information, as well as how you prefer members get in touch with you.

Higher Education? How Colleges Are Wasting Our Money and Failing Our Kids And What We Can Do About It
by Andrew Hacker and Claudia Dreifus (NASW), published by Holt/Times Books

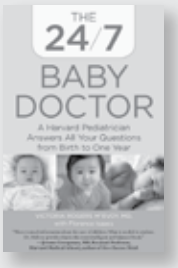
A quarter of a million dollars is the going tab for four years at most top-tier universities. Why does it cost so much and is it worth it? Andrew Hacker, a professor emeritus in the department of political science at Queens College, New York, and Claudia Dreifus, a *New York Times* writer, make an incisive case that the American way of higher education, now a $420 billion-per-year business, has lost sight of its primary mission—producing educated, knowledgeable citizens who can play a role advancing our national life and strengthening our democracy. The authors, who call for a thorough overhaul, go behind the myths and mantras to probe the performance of the Ivy League, the baleful influence of tenure, the unhealthy reliance on part-time teachers, and supersized bureaucracies that have a life of their own. They reveal those faculties and institutions that are getting it right and prove that teaching and learning can be achieved at a more reasonable price. ■ *Dreifus can be reached at 212-929-8852. PR for the book is Nicole Dewey at Nicole.Dewey@hholt.com. The book's website is www.HigherEducationQuestionMark.com.*

The Other Brain: From Dementia to Schizophrenia, How New Discoveries about the Brain Are Revolutionizing Medicine and Science
by R. Douglas Fields, Ph.D. (NASW), published by Simon & Schuster



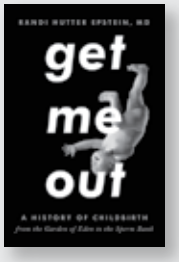
Fields, editor-in-chief of *Neuro Glia Biology*, has written a book about a revolutionary discovery that is overturning a century of conventional thinking about how the brain operates at a cellular level. "All of our ideas about how the brain works are based on the neuron doctrine, which is that all information in the brain is communicated by electrical impulses in neurons across synapses," Fields writes: "Scientists are startled to learn that this fundamental assumption is wrong." Only 15 percent of the cells in our brain are neurons; the other 85 percent (glia) have been largely dismissed as little more than packing material for neurons. Recently scientists have learned that glia communicate among themselves without using electricity. Fields describes how glia are involved in every aspect of nervous system function in health and disease and how this insight is providing new understanding of mental illnesses such as depression and schizophrenia; neurological illnesses that include Parkinson's disease, brain cancer, Alzheimer's disease; and new treatments for chronic pain and paralysis from spinal cord injury and other diseases. The book began as a cover story on the topic Fields wrote for *Scientific American*. ■ *Reach Fields at rdouglasfields@nasw.org. PR for the book is Danielle Lynn at 212-698-7538 or danielle.lynn@simonandschuster.com. The book's website is http://theotherbrainbook.com.*

The 24/7 Baby Doctor: A Harvard Pediatrician Answers All Your Questions from Birth to One Year
by Victoria Rogers McEvoy, M.D. with Florence Isaacs (NASW), published by Lyons Press/ Globe Pequot



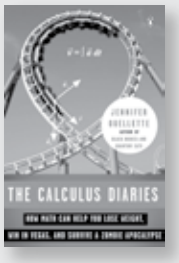
The 24/7 Baby Doctor is a 21st century reference guide for new parents, and coaches readers in an encouraging, you-can-do-this voice telling parents what they can do and when they need to consult their doctor. Topics include: sleep, food, crying, stooling, spitting up, development, health and safety, and technology. Offered are evidence-based solutions that reflect American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations and the latest research—whether on vaccines, autism, or cognitive products that supposedly make babies smarter. McEvoy is an assistant professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School and chief of pediatrics at Massachusetts General West Medical Group, in Boston. McEvoy feels newspapers, TV, and other media constantly bombard parents with the latest scares. To help calm fears and empower moms and dads, she wrote the book to answer the most frequent questions she hears from new parents. Answers are based on the latest research and her more than 30 years' experience in medical practice. Her NASW co-author, Isaacs, is a New York freelance, who is author or co-author of nine books, and a past president of the American Society of Journalists and Authors. ■ *Isaacs can be reached at fisaacs@nyc.it.com or 212-675-9197. PR for the book is Elizabeth Shreve at Elizabeth@shrevewilliams.com or 202-362-0770.*

Get Me Out: A History of Childbirth from the Garden of Eden to the Sperm Bank
by Randi Hutter Epstein, M.D. (NASW), published by Norton



Epstein, a physician, medical writer, and adjunct professor at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, wrote *Get Me Out* because she has always been intrigued by the gray zone of medicine—where doctors and patients make decisions not so much on scientific findings but on "what seems to make sense." Epstein was lured to the history of childbirth because the patient is healthy, which makes for an even more tense—or dynamic—relationship between doctor and patient compared to other fields. "What it takes to get pregnant, stay pregnant, and deliver has mystified women and men for the whole of human history," she writes. "Over the last one hundred years, depending on the latest prevailing advice, women have taken morphine, practiced Lamaze, relied on ultrasound images, sampled fertility drugs, and shopped at sperm banks." Epstein loves the science of sperm and egg: "They meet and create a human, and despite all the sophisticated imaging tools and investigations, we are still in the dark about so much of it" As part of her research, Epstein read advice books, some dating back centuries, and interviewed hundreds of doctors (some who were delivering babies in the 1940s and obstetricians just starting out today) as well as women who gave birth generations ago and those now pregnant. ■ *Epstein can be reached at rh152@columbia.edu or 212-579-0200. The book's publicist is Elizabeth Riley at Eriley@wwnorton.com.*

The Calculus Diaries: How Math Can Help You Lose Weight, Win in Vegas, and Survive a Zombie Apocalypse
by Jennifer Ouellette (NASW), published by Penguin

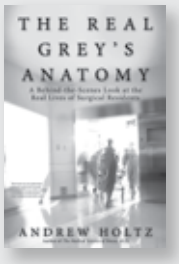


Were you traumatized by calculus? Does the mere mention of integrals and derivatives make you queasy? Jennifer Ouellette feels your pain. She never took math in college, mostly because she—like most people—assumed that she wouldn't need it in real life. *The Calculus Diaries* is an account of a year spent confronting her math phobia head on. Thinking it might be good idea for someone who wasn't naturally inclined to tackle the subject, Ouellette "went out to find examples of calculus in the real world, making it my mathematical playground." Ouellette shows how she learned to apply calculus to everything from gas mileage, diet, and the rides at Disneyland to shooting craps in Las Vegas. Along the way, she proves that even the mathematically challenged can learn the fundamentals of the universal language. A former English major turned science writer, Ouellette developed the book from a series of posts about facing down her lifelong dislike of math on her blog Cocktail Party Physics (http://www.cocktailpartyphysics.com). ■ *Ouellette can be reached at jenluc@gmail.com. Follow her on Twitter @jenlucpiquant. PR for the book is Gabrielle Gants at 212/366-2248 or Gants@us.penguingroup.com.*

Tech Transfer: Science, Money, Love, and the Ivory
by Daniel S. Greenberg (NASW), published by Kanawha Press/ Daniel S. Greenberg

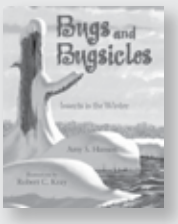
Greenberg, a Washington, D.C.-based science journalist, draws on decades of reporting on science policy, politics, and academe to craft this novel about politics and immorality in research. Greenberg's fictional institution, Kershaw University, ranks high in national standings but, in fact, is a dysfunctional institution. A tenured faculty, while constantly embroiled in bitter vendettas, is focused on protecting and enhancing its privileges. The students are mainly occupied with partying and sleeping late. Meanwhile, Kershaw's most renowned scientist is illicitly at work under a secret Army contract to develop an anti-sleep drug that can keep troops permanently awake on the battlefield. To avoid detection by the politically correct, demo-loving student body, the sleep project is disguised as basic research financed by the National Institutes of Health. Sniffing for clues and a commercial deal is a dropout postdoc working for a venture-capital firm, with ample time out for a hectic love life. When asked why he has written a novel, Greenberg explained, "Critics have frequently accused me of writing fiction. So, I figured, why not?" Grant Swinger, director of the Center for the Absorption of Federal Funds, says of the novel: "Reveals far too much about how the science system really works." ■ *Greenberg can be reached at danielg523@aol.com or 202-244-4135.*

The Real Grey's Anatomy: A Behind-the-scenes Look at the Real Lives of Surgical Residents
by Andrew Holtz (NASW), published by Berkley Books



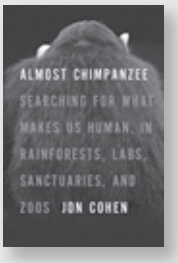
Holtz is a former CNN medical correspondent and co-anchor for *Your Health*. Author of *Medical Science of House, M.D.*, revealing the real science behind that TV program, he has now done the same for *Grey's Anatomy*. He writes about what makes surgical residents tick. Do they talk about their sex lives while cutting open a heart? How much time do interns actually spend in the OR, and do surgeons respond to death as objective doctors or as compassionate people? Since its debut, the ABC medical drama *Grey's Anatomy* has raised compelling questions. With an emphasis on the personal lives of the surgical interns, residents, and attending physician, the show has generated a flurry of interest in how these medical professionals really make it through one of the most rigorous educational programs around. Holtz notes in a preface that as a clinical instructor at Oregon Health and Science University his observations of patient care were used in the book, but that patient privacy was protected. The book was not authorized or endorsed by any entity involved in creating or producing the television series. ■ *Holtz can be reached at holtzreport@juno.com or 503-292-01699. PR for the book is Elizabeth Tobin at Elizabeth.Tobin@us.penguingroup.com.*

Bugs and Bugsicles: Insects in the Winter
by Amy S. Hansen (NASW), published by Boyds Mills Press



Hansen, a Maryland freelance specializing in science writing for children, wrote this book (for ages 4 to 8) because: "When I was young, bugs seemed magical. They'd be buzzing around all summer, and then as it got cold, they'd disappear. Where did they go? And how did they get back to my yard in the spring? Years later my kids asked the same questions, and I decided to find out." The book opens in a garden in late September, shifts to a riverbank, and then shows a snowy northern landscape. Seven double-page spreads present the stories of the insects as they prepare for winter—laying eggs in the perfect place, nymphs burrowing into mud, honeybees huddling together for warmth, or Monarch butterflies traveling all the way to Mexico, laying eggs on the journey home—and emerge/return in spring. The book concludes with two science activities related to freezing water. NOTE: Hansen's editor at Boyds Mills Press was NASW member Andy Boyles. ■ *Hansen can be reached at amy.hansen@nasw.org or 301-441-8312. Marketing person for the book is Elizabeth Knight at Elizabeth.Knight@boydsmillspress.com.*

Almost Chimpanzee: Searching for What Makes Us Human, in Rainforests, Labs, Sanctuaries, and Zoos
by Jon Cohen (NASW), published by Times Books

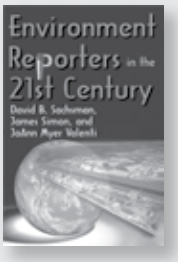


In 2005, researchers cracked the code of the chimpanzee genome, providing a window into the differences between humans and our closest primate cousins. *Science* correspondent Jon Cohen has been following the DNA hunt, as well as new studies in ape communication, human evolution, disease, and diet. In *Almost Chimpanzee*, Cohen takes readers on a scientific journey behind the scenes in cutting-edge genetics labs, rain forests in Uganda, sanctuaries in Iowa, experimental enclaves in Japan, and even the Detroit Zoo. Along the way, he ferries fresh chimp sperm for a time-sensitive analysis, gets greeted by pant-hoots and chimp feces, and investigates an audacious attempt to breed a humanzee. Cohen offers a fresh and often humorous insider's look at the latest research, which promises to lead to everything from insights about the unique ways our bodies work to shedding light on stubborn human-only problems ranging from infertility and asthma to speech disorders. Cohen also explains why it's time to move on from Jane Goodall's plea that we focus on how the two species are alike and turn to examining why our differences matter in vital ways for understanding humans and for increasing the chances to save the endangered chimpanzee. ■ *Cohen can be reached at 760-942-3252 and jcohen1@cox.net. PR for the book is Melanie DeNardo at melanie.denardo@hholt.com.*

The Good, The Bad, The Spin: Collected Salvos on Public Relations, New Media and Journalism
by Bob Conrad (NASW), published by lulu.com

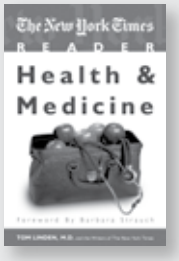
Conrad, communication officer for the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, has written a resource for those in public relations or who perform similar communications functions for businesses or organizations. Conrad exams the current state of the news media, the public relations profession, crisis communications practices, science, and emerging social media technologies. He says the book "includes important tips and lessons learned from a variety of examples. It is an examination of the shifting landscape between public relations, journalism, and new media." Conrad uses one- to two-page stories to illustrate the points he's making; many are first-hand accounts of his own experiences. He also analyses stories pulled from recent headlines. The book is based on his blog The Good, The Bad, The Spin (http://www.thegoodthebadthespin.com), which deals with the convergence of journalism, public relations, and online technology, and recommends both enthusiasm and caution for how communications are changing. Judy Strauss, Ph.D., marketing professor, University of Nevada, Reno, says the book is: "A series of cautionary tales and case studies that highlight the easily avoidable pitfalls." ■ *Conrad can be contacted at bob@conradcommunications.com or 775-636-7959.*

Environment Reporters in the 21st Century
by David Sachsman, James Simon, and JoAnn Myer Valenti, published by Transaction Publishers/Rutgers University Press



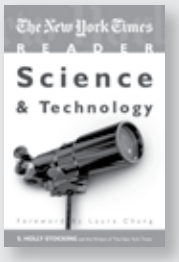
The book provides a view of American environmental journalism in the first decade of the new century. It contains a review of the literature, results of present research describing in-depth accounts of environment reporters at work, and examines whether the first decade of the 21st century was a golden age of environmental reporting. The authors note environment reporters and their sources are eager to get news out, but not always in the same way or at the same time. The results is a constant struggle among the thousands of environmental activists, corporate public relations people, government officials, and scientists to frame the message in a way that is advantageous to their point of view. David Sachsman is the West Chair of Excellence in Communication and Public Affairs at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and the author of *The Reporter's Environmental Handbook* and *Environmental Risk and the Press*. James Simon is chair and professor of English at Fairfield University and directs the school's journalism program. JoAnn Myer Valenti is an emeritus professor of communications at Brigham Young University. ■ *Valenti can be reached at valentijm@yahoo.com. Book orders through orders@transactionpub.com or 888-999-6778.*

The New York Times Reader: Health & Medicine **by Tom Linden, M.D., editor (NASW), with a foreword by Barbara Strauch, published by CQ Press**



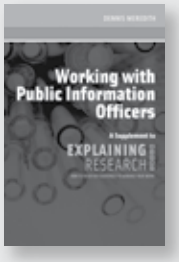
Showcasing some of the best health and medical writing in the *New York Times*, Tom Linden combines his expertise as both a physician and a writer to explore the range and depth of reporting and writing in this fascinating area. With more than 50 articles, the book includes coverage of topics ranging from amnesia to genomics to a *Times* investigation of a major pharmaceutical company. Organized around news, features, and commentary, Linden's observations elucidate the challenges these reporters face in tackling everything from nutrition to neuroscience, while his how-to guidance takes aspiring medical and health reporters to the next level. Readers will appreciate condensed interviews from five prominent *Times* medical and health reporters interspersed throughout the book, as well as how-to tips on 15 genres of health reporting, including blogs, essays, and alternative story forms. Linden directs the medical and science journalism program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and is a former CNBC and *Los Angeles Times* reporter. ■ *Press representative is Erin Snow at esnow@cqpress.com or 202-729-1845.*

The New York Times Reader: Science & Technology **by S. Holly Stocking, editor (NASW) with a foreword by Laura Chang, published by CQ Press**



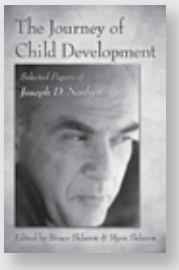
Science writers must engage their audiences while also explaining unfamiliar scientific concepts and processes. Further, they must illuminate arcane research methods while at the same time cope with scientific ignorance and uncertainty. This volume tackles these challenges as well as includes extraordinary breadth in story selection, from prize-winning narratives, profiles and explanatory pieces to accounts of scientific meetings and new discoveries, Q&A's, traditional trend-and-issue stories, reviews, essays, and blog posts. Holly Stocking is an experienced science writer, award-winning teacher, and a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. These *Times* exemplars, together with Stocking's guide to reading stories about science and technology, are perfect for science writers who aspire to diversify and hone their reporting and writing skills in a changing media climate. ■ *Press representative is Erin Snow at esnow@cqpress.com or 202-729-1845.*

Working with Public Information Officers **by Dennis Meredith (NASW), published by Glyphus LLC**



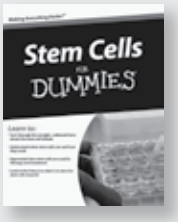
Meredith's aim in producing this guide is to help researchers develop the most productive relationships with Public Information Officers (PIOs)—whether at an institution, a journal, a scientific society, or a funding agency. He explains PIOs come in two basic models: the sales rep PIO and the PIO/journalist. The later is far more effective and credible than the sales rep PIO. One bit of advice he gives will warm the hearts of science writers: "Avoid Arbitrary Embargoes." Meredith, a North Carolina freelance, served for decades as a PIO at research universities such as MIT, Caltech, Cornell, Duke, and the University of Wisconsin. This guide is a supplement to his book *Explaining Research* (www.explainingresearch.com), which explains to researchers how to reach key audiences to advance their work. ■ *Meredith can be reached at meredith@nasw.org or 336-973-4793.*

The Journey of Child Development: Selected Papers of Joseph D. Noshpitz **edited by Bruce Sklarew and Myra Sklarew (NASW), published by Routledge**



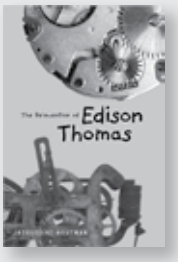
The late Joseph Noshpitz was at the forefront of psychodynamic treatment and research with children and adolescents for more than 40 years. A founder and past president of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and president of the American Association of Children's Residential Centers, Noshpitz's breadth of knowledge and wisdom ranged well beyond the traditional areas of diagnosis and therapeutic interventions, envisioning the child as an individual within the family and the wider culture. Editors Bruce Sklarew and Myra Sklarew, friends and colleagues of Noshpitz, have assembled previously unpublished papers. Each paper is introduced by experts who contemporize and contextualize the work for the modern reader. The wide-ranging topics include: ethics in child development, narcissism in the grade school years, tomboyism, idealization, negative ego ideals, and self-destructiveness in adolescence. Bruce Sklarew, M.D., is a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. Myra Sklarew, former president of the artist community Yaddo and professor emeritus of literature at American University, is now a book author based in Bethesda, Md. Myra Sklarew is handling publicity for the book, which includes a three-hour symposium at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, in October, in New York City. ■ *Reach Sklarew at msklarew@verizon.net.*

Stem Cells For Dummies
by Lawrence S.B. Goldstein, Ph.D., and Meg Schneider, published by Wiley



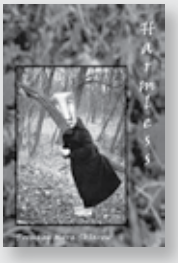
Goldstein, is director of the Stem Cell Initiative at the University of California, San Diego. Schneider is the author or co-author of several books, including *COPD For Dummies*. The book covers what stem cells are and what they do, the legalities of harvesting them and using them in research, the latest research findings from the United States and abroad, and the prospects for medical stem cells in the short and long term. In the book's Q&A format, Goldstein and Schneider answer common questions on stem cell uses, cloning, research restrictions, and more. They not only present the latest on the science of stem cells but discuss the hope of what's to come. ■ *The press representative is Adrienne Fontaine at afontain@wiley.com or 201-748-5626.*

The Reinvention of Edison Thomas
by Jacqueline Houtman, Ph.D. published by Front Street/ Boyds Mills Press



Houtman, a freelance from Madison, Wis., has written a novel for children that puts the reader inside the mind of a boy with an autism spectrum disorder as he navigates his way through the drama of middle school life. The plot broaches topics such as school bullies, classmates with sensory processing disorders, acceptance, and understanding. Houtman hopes that after reading this book, children will better understand the "odd" child on the block who covers his ears when the fire drill sounds, becomes upset when the schedule is changed, and takes jokes literally. They will also hopefully understand that being friends with the "odd" kid can have its own unique advantages. And, adults will understand how the simple gestures and acceptance of an adult can make a huge difference in helping someone make it through a day in middle school. *Publishers Weekly*'s review said: "…A perceptive look at a complicated mind, the novel is steeped in the world of science…and the quirky humor and authentic characters should have wide appeal." ■ *Houtman can be reached at www.jjhoutman.com or 608-345-4719. Her writing blog is http://jjhoutman.livejournal.com. PR for the book is Elizabeth Knight at Elizabeth.Knight@boydsmillspress.com or 570-251-4569.*

Harmless
poems by Myra Sklarew (NASW), published by Mayapple Press



This is science writer Myra Sklarew's tenth collection of poetry. Trained as a biologist, Sklarew draws upon the discourses of science and the arts in equal measure. ■ *Reach Sklarew at msklarew@verizon.net.*

One of the poems from the collection:

Sleeping in Lithuania

In Vilnius, Amatininku Pub
sends Morse code
into the dreams of sleepers
on the floors above.

And at Metropolis Hotel in Kaunas
they have rented a room
to two dogs. Shrill barks ricochet
off the vaulted ceiling.

Sleep steadies herself
on the hand rail of the broad
staircase but refuses
to enter the room.

At the killing place
in Krakes, silence is so palpable
you could sleep
for a hundred and twenty years.

NASW President
Mariette DiChristina
Scientific American and
Scientific American Mind
DICHRISTIN@AOL.COM

President's Letter

Well Met

THIS ISSUE, I WANT TO UPDATE YOU ON SEVERAL IMPORTANT ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES: THE ELECTIONS FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCIENCE WRITERS, THE VOTE ON A NEW AMENDMENT FOR THE BYLAWS APPROVED THIS PAST SPRING, OUR ANNUAL SCIENCEWRITERS MEETING THIS FALL, AND OUR PARTICIPATION IN NEXT YEAR'S EXCITING WORLD FEDERATION OF SCIENCE WRITERS MEETING IN CAIRO, EGYPT.

NASW Elections. We have scheduled the physical location for our elections, which now occur in the summer because the annual membership meeting and workshops are in the fall. (See page 14 for election details.) We're holding the gathering in New York City, so I can preside (and save the organization travel $$). The organization's next board of directors will take office this November. (See page 10 for candidate statements and bios.)

Amendment VIII. As you may recall, Article VIII in the organization's new bylaws, approved in February, proposed a new procedure in the event a person's membership had to be terminated—an event that, fortunately, has never occurred in our organization. Many members wanted to give that amendment greater refinement, so we deferred the vote on it to this fall's annual meeting. For several months now, an ad hoc committee co-chaired by board member Dan Ferber and member John Gever has been hashing through all aspects of the bylaws amendment dealing with any potential member sanctions. The result will be up for vote at the annual meeting in New Haven, Conn. Many thanks again to committee volunteers David Lawrence, David Levine, Jennie Dusheck, Melissa Blouin, and Norman Bauman for their hard work in making sure this amendment is both as fair to members and practical for NASW to administrate.

ScienceWriters Annual Meeting. I'm looking forward to seeing many of you at our ScienceWriters annual meeting, which will combine NASW's craft-oriented workshops with the New Horizons briefings organized by the Council for the Advancement of Science Writers. This year, we are celebrating NASW's 75th anniversary and CASW's 50th and the location is Yale University. Special events will mark this grand occasion (see page 30 for details). In the coming weeks, look for notices of fellowships to attend the meeting.

World Federation of Science Journalists. If our national meeting activities weren't enough, NASW is going international in 2011: The organization is involved in a historic partnership with the Arab Science Journalists Association (ASJA) as we co-host the 7th World Conference for Science Journalists together in Cairo, Egypt next June.

The co-bid grew out of a twinning relationship forged between the two associations in 2007 under the umbrella of the World Federation of Science Journalists (WSJA). NASW is hitting the three-quarters-of-a-century mark and ASJA is celebrating its fifth year in 2011, but both organizations share an enduring commitment to fostering the improvement of science coverage that transcends national boundaries. The personal relationships and joint activities that have blossomed between the organizations since then will bring the skills, experience, and knowledge of both organizations to the meeting in 2011. In this, I am indebted to past NASW president and current international liaison, Deborah Blum, and the volunteers. As we did for the last WFSJ meeting in London in 2009, we will offer Laura van Dam Fellowships. Stay tuned for details. ■

Cybrarian
Russell Clemings
Fresno Bee
CYBRARIAN@NASW.ORG

Cyberbeat

IT'S BEEN A BUSY SPRING WITH THE ONGOING REDESIGN OF BOTH THE NASW AND THE SCIENCEWRITERS MEETING WEBSITES. BUT AS WE MOVE INTO THE FINAL PHASES, WE'RE ALREADY THINKING ABOUT HOW TO GENERATE MORE AND FRESHER CONTENT FOR OUR ORGANIZATION'S PUBLIC FACE.

Some of the ideas we've come up with include pointers to interesting discussions on the e-mail lists (soon to become forums), notable items in science news and blogs, more commissioned articles like those recently added to the freelance resources section, and more frequent updates on conference planning and other NASW news.

We welcome your ideas both for content and for ways of generating it. Send them to me at cybrarian@nasw.org.

NASW-TALK

In mid-April, Colorado Springs freelancer Matt Bille asked a question that sparked a discussion about scientific data

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

—specifically, how much of it should be made available to the public?

An amateur researcher and climate-change skeptic had asked for data on tree-ring measurements used by a British university professor for a paper on global warming. The professor resisted, according to the news.

"In cases where research has been supported with public funds, is the public entitled to see the raw data?" Bille asked. "As much as I agree with the emotional response by a professor and his colleagues who did a lot of hard fieldwork to gather information, and more hard work to analyze it, it's hard for me to grasp the notion that research funded by taxpayers should be kept away from taxpayers."

Washington, D.C., freelancer Bob Roehr agreed: "The thought that the researcher 'owns' the research is archaic and never reflected the reality of research conducted with government support (or that of other funders who increasingly require transparency). The people who pay the bills are as much a contributor to the research, and have as much an ownership stake, as do the people who actually do the work."

Mary Beckman, senior science writer at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, Wash., raised some practical concerns. If she were the scientist, she said, "I certainly wouldn't want to distribute Excel files full of numbers that will require lots of explanations, not if such files were editable by people I don't know or trust to understand what the point is. And frankly, getting raw data into a public-friendly format is going to take time and manpower. Why expend that effort? Will the requestor pay for that, because that activity was presumably NOT in the original grant?"

One subtext to the discussion was the fact that the tree-ring data was being requested by someone who presumably was hoping to use it as ammunition for an attack on climate change science.

"The plea for 'openness' appeals to our sense of fair play in the same way as 'teach the controversy' does for intelligent design," said Summit, N.J., freelancer Don Monroe. "Both can be a smokescreen obscuring a less honorable motive."

Monroe then mentioned a book that accused researchers funded by tobacco companies of deceptively re-analyzing raw data from studies linking smoking and cancer.

"For example, they might define an

Rules to Govern NASW

Dispatches from the Director

Tinsley Davis
Executive Director
DIRECTOR@NASW.ORG

The Role of a Board Member

NASW elections are imminent, and while the candidates may come from different areas of science writing and bring different strengths to the table, serving on any nonprofit board legally requires a baseline of service and understanding from each board member. Here's a quick primer on what you can expect your board members to know and do.

NASW is a 501(c)(6) nonprofit incorporated in the state of New York, and as such, the board is the ultimate governing body, entrusted with the care of the organization—no matter how large or small it is. Importantly, the board ensures viability of the organization by providing oversight and asking itself these questions:

1) Is NASW fulfilling its mission?

2) In what direction should NASW head and how should it get there?

3) How do we provide continuity of leadership? Board members serve for two-year terms; a smooth hand-off is important. The board also oversees the executive director.

4) Is NASW financially sound? While the finance committee, lead by the treasurer, undertakes financial planning, board members should have a working understanding of the budget, current accounts, tax filing status, etc.

5) Does NASW adhere to all legal frameworks? Board actions are held to three legal principles that rely on individual board member's actions. Each board member has the following legal requirements:

A) Duty of Care: Show up, speak up, come prepared, exercise independent judgment.

B) Duty of Loyalty: Put the organization first by disclosing potential conflicts of interest, respect confidentiality, act fairly, and realize that even though you may not be speaking for the organization, as a board member, some may assume you are.

C) Duty of Obedience: Be familiar with the governance regulations and laws applicable to NASW and comply with them; ensure taxes and other forms are filed.

Oversight is critical

Board members are expected to be active and engaged, contributing to discussions of NASW business and actively participating in or leading at least one committee, amounting to an average of a few hours per week. Officers will spend more time, but the good news is that, unlike many nonprofit boards, NASW does not engage in fund-raising and thus doesn't expect board members to contribute financially. ■

'exposed group' that lumped together a few people with high exposure and many others with low exposure, and find no effect for the combined group," he said.

In the end, though, the argument for sharing data boils down to a question of good science, said *MedPage Today* senior editor John Gever from Wheeling, W.Va. "The broader point to me is that refusing to share data, or picking and choosing whom to share it with, is antithetical to the scientific enterprise. Often it's impractical to replicate a study by going out to collect all new data—we're not going to send up a second Hubble telescope—but having somebody else re-analyze the data with a different method is an important form of corroboration."

Read the entire conversation by searching the April 2010 NASW-talk archives for the subject, "Should raw data be restricted?"

NASW-FREELANCE

Arcane details of punctuation and typography dominated list discussions for a few days in March.

Evanston, Ill. freelancer Marisa Naujokas posed a question about the proper use of an en-dash with compound modifiers.

"I am curious about whether you use them, are required to use them, and under what circumstances. Is it convention or required? And defining compound modifiers in scientific lingo can be somewhat tricky. Is "HSV-infected" a compound modifier? "Fully-competent"? "EBV-specific"?"

First from Alameda, Calif. freelancer Joe Devney, who quoted the *Chicago Manual of Style*: "The en-dash is also used in place of a hyphen in a compound adjective when one of the elements of the adjective is an open compound (such as New York) or when two or more of the elements are hyphenated compounds." As in "New York–London flight," for example.

Then NASW president and *Scientific American* editor Mariette DiChristina chimed in: "Hi, editor here," she began. "Em-dash is a dash, '—.' You use them for setting up parenthetical phrases—among other uses—in a sentence. En-dash is an en-dash, '–' when you're inputting on a keyboard, but it typically looks shorter than the en-dash when typeset. You use it for a compound modifier that involves two words: *Scientific American* is a New York–based media outlet. Hyphen is "-" and yes, they link compound modifiers or signify a broken word at the end of a line."

However, she continued, "editors would strike the hyphen between 'fully' and 'competent,' because an 'ly' word typically is an adverb. So, it is understood that what follows is a compound modifier."

A few exchanges later, San Diego freelancer Merry Maisel gave the list a history lesson.

"Oh, lordy, I must be the oldest person here. 'Em' and 'en' dashes date from the nineteenth century conventions for the design of type fonts in different point sizes. A point is an actual measure of distance. There are 12 points in a pica and six picas to the inch. The body on which each letter was built was a square in the point size. For example, 12-point type used a 12-point by 12-point square. The capital M (hence 'em') filled the body. A dash whose length was the width of the body was thus called an 'em' dash. The capital N (hence 'en') was half the width, as was the 'en' dash. In 12-point type, then, an em-dash was 12 points long, an en-dash was six points long, and a hyphen was about three points long. The proportions were preserved in other sizes of type."

Read the rest of the thread, including a discussion of how hot-metal typefaces evolved into typewriter and computer fonts, by searching the March 2010 NASW-freelance archives for the subjects, "Use of en-dashes" and "Computer typography." ■

Pam Frost Gorder
Assistant Director
of Research Communications
Ohio State University
GORDER.1@OSU.EDU

Our Gang

This papa don't preach. **Paul Raeburn** won the 2010 Media Award for Print Coverage of Family Issues from the Council on Contemporary Families, an academic research organization, for his story "The Father Factor," which appeared in *Scientific American Mind*. The council commended him on the quality of his writing and research and the importance of this neglected subject. Raeburn says he couldn't have done it without the fine editing of **Mariette DiChristina**. Reach him at paulraeburn@nasw.org.

Sharon Glassman ***has become an online material girl.*** The freelancer is writing an ongoing "science for non-scientists" series for the Huffington Post that includes an interview with Hayden Planetarium Director Neil deGrasse Tyson about Pluto and the positive power of scientific disagreement. She's also working with agencies such as the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research to create audio and video web content that conveys science to general audiences in fact-based, yet friendly ways. She also reports that she's talking with scientists about possible collaborations on books, videos, and more. Write sharon@sharonglassman.com for details.

Ivan Amato ***is true blue.*** He joined the Pew Charitable Trusts to become senior officer, communications, in the Pew Health Group. Although Pew is headquartered in Philadelphia, he will be working in Pew's new building in Washington, D.C., aiding the trusts' mission to "further the public good in consequential and measurable ways." You can reach him at iamato@pewtrusts.org.

Hollywood bound? **Phillip Manning** wrote three books for Chelsea House Publishers' "Science Foundations" series. *Gravity*, *Quantum Theory*, and *Relativity* are all scheduled to appear in bookstores later this year. But will he go Hollywood, now that he's been appointed scientific advisor for the videos accompanying Infobase Publishing's "Essential Chemistry" series? He reports that the gig brings him "not a lot of money, but a fun job finding errors made by world-class videographers who don't know much chemistry." Write him at pvmanning@mindspring.com to ask how many world-class videographers it takes to light a Bunsen burner.

If she was frozen when she spoke on our profession at the Science and Mass Media conference on March 24 in Oslo, Norway, at least **Nancy Shute** thawed out in time to speak at the DCSWA Professional Development Day on April 17, and a

GORDER COURTESY OF JO McCULTY

SWINY meeting April 26. She continues to blog and edit podcasts for *U.S. News & World Report* as a contributing editor. Reach her at nancy@nancyshute.com to see if your town can join her speaking tour.

Seattle may be known for rain, but now it's also known for being home to **Steve Olson.** After 30 years of freelancing in and around Washington, D.C., he recently moved west after his wife took a job at the Gates Foundation. He's still freelancing for clients in New York and D.C., and has been co-writing a book with Greg Graffin—co-founder and front-man for the punk band Bad Religion (and an evolutionary biologist who teaches at UCLA when the band's not on tour). The book is called *Anarchy Evolution: Faith, Science, and Bad Religion in a World Without God* and is due out in October from HarperStudio. Write him at steve@steveolson.com.

Marcia Bartusiak *didn't have to wish on a lucky star* to be an award-winning science writer. She earned the Klumpke-Roberts Award from the Astronomical Society of the Pacific for her outstanding contributions to the public understanding and appreciation of astronomy. Meanwhile, her book *The Day We Found the Universe* was a finalist in the science and technology category of the *Los Angeles Times* 2009 Book Prizes. The book takes its title from the day in 1925 that Edwin Hubble announced that the Milky Way was only one of many galaxies in the universe. Write her at bar2siak@mit.edu to ask if anything interesting happened the day *before* we found the universe.

He lives on la isla bonita. The Australia Academy of Science awarded **Peter Pockley** its 2010 Academy Medal for advancing the cause of science and technology in the country. The academy hailed him as one of the pioneers of science broadcasting, stating that he "led teams and fronted programs which transformed the medium. He combined lively presentation with rigorous accuracy, flair with the highest standards of authority." Pockley is currently senior correspondent for *Australasian Science* and is engaged in numerous other projects including the oral history program of leading scientists. He received his academy medal from the governor-general of the Commonwealth of Australia in May. Give him a "good on ya" at scicomm@bigpond.net.au.

Dan Ferber *shined a spotlight* on an environmental problem when he wrote "Downwind of the Big Dairy Farm," for *Nuvo Newsweekly*, and won a first place award from the Indiana chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. He reports that the farmers who were profiled in the piece, Eric and Lisa Stickdorn, are still fighting to stop the fumes from their neighbor's factory farm so they can safely move back home. Write him at ferber@nasw.org to find out what's happening now.

Larry Krumenaker *crossed the borderline* to become a visiting scholar at Seoul National University in South Korea. Starting in June 2010 he will spend at least eight months teaching, mentoring, and researching astronomy and science education. He'll take with him his growing publishing business—Hermograph Press—and its latest product, *The Classroom Astronomer* quarterly magazine. He describes the magazine as an almost completely virtual operation, marketed in print and PDF forms, with most communications done over e-mail and the web. "Therefore," he says, "I am now announcing that I'm going to try to prove that if you can do this in your hometown, you can do this from any place!" In Seoul, he'll continue to work on other projects, including two books—one of which is based on his dissertation for his 2008 doctorate in science education. He can be reached at larryk@toteachthestars.net.

Angela Posada-Swafford *was causing a commotion* among children in three separate countries when she broadcast penguin antics live over wireless Internet from Antarctica in December 2009. That unprecedented technological feat was all part of a day's work for the newly minted co-director of the Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL) Polar Logan Program. As such, Posada-Swafford is now part of a panel that selects journalists to go to Toolik Lake Station in Alaska and Palmer Station in Antarctica—both part of the Long Term Ecological Research Study system. She will also guide the direction of the Logan Science Journalism Program. When you write to her at angela@angelaposadaswafford.com, ask her what it was like to navigate around icebergs on her way to Torgersen Island—the site of her penguin broadcast.

These ladies should take a bow. Speaking of the MBL, three NASW members were among the 16 who earned Logan Science Journalism Fellowships this year. Biomedical Fellows **Tina Hesman Saey** of *Science News* and freelancer **Cassandra Willyard** received hands-on science training in Woods Hole, Mass., in May, when hundreds of biologists gathered to do research. Meanwhile, Polar fellow and freelancer **Chelsea Wald** ventured to Toolik Lake Station in June to be a part of some of today's most cutting-edge ecological research. Write to them at tina.hesman@gmail.com, cwillyard@nasw.org, and cwald@nasw.org to hear all about their adventures.

Sergio Pistoi *wants you to express yourself.* He recently became a member of the public education committee of the International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR), the largest scientific society in the field of stem cell research. He hopes to bring new ideas for ISSCR dissemination activities, and would appreciate any input from fellow NASW members. "Do you have proposals, comments, or crazy ideas about communicating stem cell research that you never dare to say?" he asks. "Call me, and I'll forward them to the eggheads." You can also write to him at sergio@sergiopistoi.com.

Kristina E. Anderson *has earned a holiday*. She won a 2010 writing award from New Mexico Press Women for a cover story she wrote for *Scanner*, a news magazine published by the American Society of Radiologic Technologists. The story was published in the June/July 2009 issue and was titled "The Obama Health Care Plan: What It Is." Congratulate her at kristina@easyreadwriting.com.

Freelancer* Megan Scudellari *is into the groove at *The Scientist*. After freelancing for the magazine for a year and a half, she's been hired as a correspondent. She now does breaking news for the website, as well as news and features for the magazine. Write her at megan@scudellari.com.

Cheryl Platzman Weinstock*'s achievements are supernatural.* Her article in the December 2009 *Glamour*, "Thirteen Symptoms You Should Never Ignore," won an

Correction

In a photo caption for "The Immortal Book Tour" (*SW*, spring 2010) Rebecca Skloot was incorrectly identified as Deborah Skloot. ■

honorable mention in the American Society of Journalists and Authors' 2010 Outstanding Article Awards. The same piece earned her a first place in specialized reporting from the Connecticut Press Club. That's not all. In June, a fellowship from the National Press Foundation enabled her to attend a week-long workshop on retirement issues in the 21st century. That same month, she used her NASW career grant to attend the Poynter Institute's Backpack Journalist seminar. Ask her how she does it at cherylpw@optonline.net.

Arizona science writer* Alaina G. Levine *was in vogue in Italy early in July. She won a Robert Bosch Stiftung Fellowship for International Science Journalists to participate in the Euroscience OpenForum 2010 in Torino. Write to her at alaina@alainalevine.com to say *congratulazioni*!

Ray of light. The American Astronomical Society's Division for Planetary Sciences (DPS) awarded **George Musser**, editor at *Scientific American*, the Jonathan Eberhart Planetary Sciences Journalism Award. The DPS recognized Musser's "distinguished popular writing on the planetary sciences." Send good wishes to gmusser@nasw.org.

Who's that girl? It's **Nancy Garcia**, who began a half-time new media role with KQED in San Francisco in the winter. There, she promotes public media content (including QUEST multimedia science news) through social media and produces some multimedia herself. As that temporary role comes to a close, she reports that she is ready for her next challenge. Ms. Ciccone would approve of the attitude. Write to Garcia at nancygarcia4@comcast.net. ■

Suzanne Clancy
Editor
Clinical Lab Products
SCLANCYPHD@YAHOO.COM

Regional Groups

NEW ENGLAND

In March, New England Science Writers launched a new website at its own URL and is represented on four popular social media platforms (blog, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn). Check it all out at **http://neswonline.com**.

In April, blogger, freelance journalist, and author Chris Mooney addressed NESW members on how Americans' lack of science knowledge is negatively influencing policy decisions and how journalists can be part of the solution—but not by piecemeal study-by-study coverage. To help, Mooney suggests NSF should award grants directly for science communication in strategic areas. The next big thing in science after the Human Genome Project? According to Mooney: Geoengineering to fix the climate. Mooney blogs at **http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/intersection** and is the author of three books, including his latest (co-authored with Sheril Kirshenbaum) titled *Unscientific America: How Scientific Illiteracy Threatens Our Future*.

NEW YORK

SWINY's popular events continued with a field trip to Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) in March. Science writers had the opportunity to discuss BNL's Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider with BNL physicists and the Large Hadron Collider with physicists at CERN, the European laboratory for particle physics, via a live satellite feed. Those who attended gained an appreciation of the most advanced technology on earth designed to dissect the subatomic forces that are the basis for the existence of the universe.

Also in March, SWINY found itself "Talkin' Trash!" The program was organized and moderated by long-time board member Carol Milano, who has provided the SWINY community with many fun, creative, innovative, and fascinating programs. This one was no exception. About 35 science writers heard Eric Goldstein, co-director of the urban program at Natural Resources Defense Council; Dietmar Offenhuber, team leader of MIT's "Trash Track" program, SenseAble City Lab; Annie White, director, Coalition for Resource Recovery and Global Green's New York office; and Maggie Clarke, "Zero Waste" researcher, analyst, educator, and activist, discuss "One City + 12,000 Tons of Daily Waste = Surprises and Opportunities." An excellent synopsis of the program, written by NASW's Robin Lloyd, can be found at **http://bit.ly/9X1pRl**.

SWINY has also organized several well-attended programs on social media. The most recent was held in April. Organized and mediated by SWINY Board co-president David Levine, the topic was "Social Media in the Next Decade: What's happening now, how it will change, and how writers can take advantage of it." An impressive line-up of panelists included NASW vice president Nancy Shute, Dave Mosher, an up-and-coming web producer and freelance writer, and David Dobbs, a well known science journalist and author. A cameo appearance by Ivan Oransky added critical perspective. Find out more about the program at **http://www.swiny.org/events/**.

LOS ANGELES

Science Writers of Los Angeles (SWoLA) is an effort to revive several incarnations of LA-based science writers groups. In March, a networking event was held at a brew pub called Bar * Food, in West Los Angeles. Organizers were encouraged by the turnout (free hot dogs and cheap beer makes even the worst LA driving situations more palatable). Soon after this meeting, SWoLA supporters met for a film screening and attended a book signing by author Rebecca Skloot. An e-mail group has been created to keep science writers connected and to promote future events. If you are a science writer interested in becoming involved with SWoLA, contact Katharine (Kate) Gammon at kategammon@gmail.com.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

On April 17, the D.C. Science Writers Association (DCSWA) held its 2010 DCSWA Professional Development Day. It was a resounding success. Over 110 people attended; the largest turnout yet for this event. Highlights included a plenary session about science writing in Hollywood and an update on the state of our profession from long-time science writers Charlie Petit and Deborah Blum. At the event, DCSWA announced the winners of the first annual Science Newsbrief Award, which recognizes excellent short (less than 500 words) science writing. The winner was ScienceNOW's Sam Kean, for "Mother's Cancer

CLANCY COURTESY OF MARC LIEBERMAN

Can Infect Her Fetus." Honorable mentions were also awarded to Helen Fields and Sarah C.P. Williams.

On May 14, DCSWA and the AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellows—groups that share a passion for 1) the impact of science on society and 2) socializing—held their first-ever joint happy hour (hopefully one of many).

On May 22, 26 DCSWA members went on a wetlands-and-archaeology tour on the Patuxent River, which feeds into Chesapeake Bay and is located an hour from Washington, D.C. Aboard a pontoon boat, a park naturalist discussed wetlands issues, especially the impact of rising sea level. A highlight was watching an Osprey chick pecking out of its shell. The archaeological portion of the trip involved a visit to an 18th century plantation house and a nearby dig in an area where thousands of artifacts have already been discovered, some 8,000 to 10,000 years old. An archaeologist explained the cultural impact of the Native Americans, European Americans, and African-Americans who inhabited the area and interacted over the last four centuries.

CHICAGO

On May 13, the Chicago Science Writers joined with students in the science-writing sequence at Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism for a lunch of pizza and electrifying conversation. Daniel Abraham, a material scientist and a team leader at Argonne National Laboratory, talked about research aiming to develop more efficient batteries to power a vast array of electronic devices and cars. Abraham, a leading scientist in the field of lithium-ion batteries, discussed how earlier technology to power cars with batteries failed because the batteries were too large.

Abraham leads an effort to identify performance degradation mechanisms in lithium-ion cells to enable development of alternative materials and components that enhance cell performance, calendar life, and safety. The lithium-ion cell has become a front-runner in rechargeable technology, and research to improve its ability to become a commercial option is underway. The next generation of high-performance battery technologies could have a capacity for energy storage five to 10 times greater than that of Li-ion batteries, but technical challenges must be overcome to realize the promise of Lithium-air, or Li-air, battery technologies. ■

Five NASW Members Receive Lindau Travel Support

Congratulations to NASW members **Gretchen Cuda**, reporter/producer for science and health, WVIZ-PBS WCPN-NPR; **Christopher Mims**, *Discover* magazine; **Bob Roehr**, freelance biomedical reporter and contributor to *British Medical Journal*; **John Simmons**, book author; and **John R. Timmer**, science editor, Ars Technica, who received travel funds to attend the 60th meeting on Nobel laureates, in Lindau, Germany. Together the recipients represent a range of backgrounds, media, and publications. Thank you to all who applied for this opportunity.

This is the third year that The Council for the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings invited NASW to select four members to attend this meeting in which Nobel Laureate scientists meet with hundreds of young researchers. This summer, the meeting was dedicated to the field of chemistry and was held June 27 to July 2. ■

Recession Causes NASW Members to Leave

BY LARRY KRUMENAKER

Last year, the NASW statistical section geographically analyzed our membership, noting certain preferential parameters. But that was before the Great Recession had sunk its teeth into the economy. 2010 seemed like a good time to repeat the investigation to see what effects the recession has had on NASW members.

First, there's been a drop of approximately 200 members, almost 10 percent of last year's membership. Out of 50 states plus D.C., 34 show a membership decline. Nine states held steady: Iowa, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Utah, and Wyoming. Only eight states showed membership gains: Except for Georgia, which went from 9 to 26 people (!), the gains are minimal. The other states with gains were Indiana, Michigan, Montana, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, and West Virginia.

No pattern is evident other than more highly populated or industrial states usually experienced a greater fall in membership whereas low populated/less industrialized states managed to hold onto the few science writers they have. Speaking of few, the only state last year with no science writers was South Dakota. I haven't checked the name yet but there's a writer there now, but none in North Dakota. Did they move the border?

Second, last year five states had more than 50 percent of all NASW members; this year the same five still do and the rankings remain the same. However, all five states lost members with the largest two (California and New York) losing the most, their difference widening considerably from last year's single digit.

Where did the 10 percent go? No idea. But just out of curiosity, to see if any writers besides moi changed continents to find better employment, I tallied up non-U.S.-residing members. Last year, the total was 68; this year, 73. Most of the gain is in Europe (36 to 40), Australia gained two (2 to 4), and Africa went down from 2 to 1.

The largest single country outside of the U.S. with NASW representation is Canada, holding steady at 21 members. Most of the European gain was in the U.K. (7 to 11). Given this data, it is apparently better to be an expatriate in a purely English-speaking country. To prove the point, Switzerland—a land of four languages—fell from 11 to 9; Germany and Italy have six each. Korea…now has 1. While not as much as Europe or Canada, Korea is sufficiently English-speaking that I may have made the write, er, right move. *An-nyung-hi!* ■

FREELANCE WRITER, EDUCATOR, AND PUBLISHER OF *THE CLASSROOM ASTRONOMER* MAGAZINE, LARRY KRUMENAKER, PH.D., IS CURRENTLY AT SEOUL NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, SOUTH KOREA.

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 or e-mail editor@nasw.org. ■

Copyrighting Facts Owning the News

Facts, ruled America's Supreme Court in 1918 in the "hot news doctrine," cannot be copyrighted. But a news agency can retain exclusive use of its product so long as it has a commercial value. Now newspapers, fed up with stories being "scraped" by other websites, want that ruling made into law.

The idea is floated in a discussion document published by the Federal Trade Commission, which is holding hearings on the news industry's future. Media organizations would have the exclusive right, for a predetermined period, to publish their material online. The draft also considers curtailing fair use, the legal principle that allows search engines to reproduce headlines and links, so long as the use is selective and transformative (as with a list of search results). Jeff Jarvis, who teaches journalism students to become entrepreneurs at New York's City University, says this sounds like an attempt to protect newspapers more than journalism.

This sounds like an attempt to protect newspapers more than journalism.

Germany is mulling something similar. A recent paper by two publishers' associations proposed changing copyright law to protect not only articles but also headlines, sentences, and even fragments of text.

Critics say that would extend copyright to facts. It would also be hard to make either regime work in practice. In America, a regulator would presumably need to determine the period of commercial value: perhaps two hours for news of an earthquake, 30 minutes for sports results. In Germany, publishers want a fee on commercial computer use. Germany's justice minister last week hinted at support for the news industry, but also said that a new law would not stir young people to buy newspapers. New products, she says, would be a better response to flagging demand. ■

"Copyright Facts: Owning the News," The Economist*, June 26, 2010.*

In Memoriam

Gershon Fishbein

Journalist and newsletter publisher

Gershon Fishbein, 88, a former *Washington Post* assistant city editor who started an independent newsletter publishing company that he ran for more than 25 years, died March 29 of a heart attack at his home in Bethesda. He had been an NASW member since 1954.

Fishbein's journalism career spanned more than 50 years and began when he was hired at age 16 to cover sports part time for the *Post*. He served two other stints at the *Post*, as a full-time reporter from 1939 to 1941 and as assistant city editor from 1949 to the mid-1950s.

He worked for *Television Digest* and *Medical Tribune* in the late 1950s. Realizing that environmental regulation would be an increasingly important issue, he opened the publishing company Environews in 1961.

His inaugural publication was the *Environmental Health Letter*, which appeared the year before Rachel Carson launched the modern environmental movement with the book *Silent Spring*. The subscription-based newsletter informed legislators and industry insiders about the important and often nitty-gritty policy developments in Washington. In 1971, he started the *Occupational Health and Safety* newsletter and 10 years later launched *Genetic Engineering Letter.*

Fishbein helped organize the Newsletter Publishers Association (now the Newsletter and Electronic Publishers Association) and led a successful push to get congressional press credentials for newsletter writers. After selling his company in the late 1980s, he continued to write about international health care on a freelance basis.

Gershon Fishbein was a Washington native and a 1939 graduate of the old Central High School, whose alumni newsletter he edited until his death. He graduated in 1943 from George Washington University. The day Pearl Harbor was attacked, he was the only person in the *AP* office. "He spent the next 36 hours on the phone taking notes from the field and filing copy and chronicling the start of the U.S.'s involvement in World War II," his son, Larry, said during the funeral.

While stationed in Paris, Fishbein wrote for *Stars and Stripes* and for the *International Herald Tribune*. He took graduate classes in political science at the Sorbonne, in French. His drinking buddies in those days included Andy Rooney, Art Buchwald, John Steinbeck, and Ernest Hemingway.

(source: Washington Post *and* Washington Jewish Week*)*

■ ■ ■

Martin Gardner

Scientific American "Mathematical Games" columnist

Prolific mathematics and science writer Martin Gardner, known for popularizing recreational mathematics and debunking paranormal claims, died May 22, after a brief illness. He was 95.

Martin Gardner was born in 1914 in Tulsa, Okla., and earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy at the University of Chicago. He became a freelance writer, and in the 1950s wrote features and stories for several children's magazines. His creation of paper-folding puzzles led to his publication in *Scientific American* magazine, where he wrote his "Mathematical Games" column for 25 years. The column introduced the public to puzzles and concepts such as fractals and Chinese tangram puzzles, as well as the work of artist M.C. Escher.

Allyn Jackson, deputy editor of *Notices*, a journal of the American Mathematical Society, wrote in 2005 that Gardner "opened the eyes of the general public to the beauty and fascination of mathematics and inspired many to go on to make the subject their life's work." Jackson said Gardner's "crystalline prose, always enlightening, never pedantic, set a new standard for high quality mathematical popularization."

The mathematics society awarded him its Steele Prize for Mathematical Exposition in 1987 for his work on math, particularly his *Scientific American* column.

Gardner also became known as a skeptic of the paranormal and wrote columns for *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine. He wrote works debunking public figures such as psychic Uri Geller, who gained fame for claiming to bend spoons with his mind. Most recently he wrote a feature published in *Skeptical Inquirer*'s March/April on

HOLDEN SELF-PORTRAIT BY CONSTANCE HOLDEN, COURTESY OF THE HOLDEN FAMILY

Oprah Winfrey's New Age interests.

Former magician James Randi, now a writer and investigator of paranormal claims, paid tribute to Gardner on his website, calling his colleague and longtime friend "a very bright spot in my firmament."

Gardner ended his *Scientific American* column in 1981 and retired to Hendersonville, N.C. He continued to write, and in 2002 moved to Norman, Okla. where his son lives. Gardner wrote more than 50 books.
(source: Associated Press)

■ ■ ■

Constance Holden
Accomplished science journalist and artist

Constance Holden, 68, a veteran journalist who for 40 years wrote for the news section of the journal *Science*, died on April 12 when she was struck and killed by a truck providing support for the Nuclear Security Summit taking place in downtown Washington, D.C. She was riding home on a bicycle, having just left work at the AAAS headquarters.

Affectionately known to friends and colleagues as "Tancy," Holden had joined the staff of *Science* magazine in 1970. She was an award-winning reporter, highly regarded for her comprehensive coverage of the biological and genetic bases for human behavior. In addition to writing news features about social science, and particularly psychology, she had long edited the journal's weekly "Random Samples" page, a compendium of newsworthy scientific developments.

The staggering range of her stories—on policy, research, and the intersection of science and society—mirrored her insatiable curiosity. Her exceptional understanding of the biological and genetic bases of human behavior was recognized in 2004, when she was honored by the National Mental Health Association for stories exploring new developments relating to schizophrenia, depression, and other mental health issues. Judges praised her work for its accessibility, and for her skill at writing clearly about seemingly complex information.

Holden was a highly accomplished artist whose oil paintings have regularly appeared on the walls of AAAS. ■
(source: AAAS)

Friends and Colleagues Remember Constance Holden

Self-portrait

"I had many interviews with Constance over the years and always found her fair, focused on getting the science right, and insightful in her writing. She contributed greatly to telling the story of science advances over the last 40 years. We will miss her energy, passion for biomedical research, and dedication to her craft. Our hearts go out to her family and colleagues."
Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D.
Director, National Institutes of Health

"[She] was held in very high esteem and with great affection by both those people with whom she worked and our readers. This is a terrible loss both personally and professionally for so many on our staff who knew her well."
Alan I. Leshner
Chief Executive Officer , AAAS

"She was a unique personality and a wonderful reporter and a great colleague. She will be deeply missed."
Colin Norman
News Editor for Science

"I was just one of the many, many science journalists who got my start, in part, writing for Tancy. I believe my first piece ever in *Science* was a 'Random Sample' on the creation of a new society for scientists studying symbiosis. I had filed something like 1,700 words. Tancy, as she did countless times with countless newbie writers, cut it to a few hundred on a very tight deadline. For years, my office was just down the hall from Tancy's; I spent many hours there drinking ice water, laughing, and arguing. Our profession has lost a unique voice and personality, and a wonderful head of red hair. I'll miss you Tancy."
David Malakoff
Freelance Writer

"I will always remember Tancy trying out a new yoga pose in the hallway, her portraits of other science writers, and her vociferous defenses of contrarian politics if she though they were right. Tancy will be very much missed indeed."
Kim Krieger
Editor, Argus Media, Inc.

"She was very helpful for me when I was doing my William Shockley biography because she had fearlessly covered the twin studies that in some ways supported one of his thesis. She was totally reliable and accurate, and I happily accepted what she told me without question. She also was at Stanford as a journalism fellow when I was there but hated the lack of pressure. She wanted to be working. We were amused and sent her home early. She was a fabulous pianist, a brilliant artist, and one of our very best science writers. She was, in many ways, a very beautiful woman."
Joel Shurkin
Freelance Writer

"I have been reading her stories so long, I can't imagine Science *without her. For me, she represents all of the best things about the magazine."*
Jennie Dusheck
Freelance Writer

NASW Continues to Look Back at Science Milestones

In the spring issue, ScienceWriters *revisited events from 1934-59. This issue flashbacks to NASW's next twenty-five years with its significant historical discoveries and huge strides in space and innovation. 1985-2010 will be featured in the fall issue.* ■ *This fall's ScienceWriters 2010 conference will include anniversary celebrations in honor of NASW's 75th and CASW's 50th.*

1960

Echo I, first passive communications satellite, is launched

Birth control pills debut in the U.S.

NASA launches Tiros I, the first weather satellite

1961

Alan Shepard is first American in space (Mercury III)

First manned space flight (Vostok I) with Soviet Yuri Gagarin aboard

Thalidomide found to cause birth defects

1962

First use of lasers in eye surgery

John Glenn, first American to orbit earth

Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* documents effects of pesticides on the ecosystem

1963

Digital Equipment Corporation introduces first mini computer

Soviet Valentina Tereshkova-Nikolayeva become first woman in space

Quasars are discovered

First commercial nuclear reactor goes online

1964

Surgeon General's Report links cigarette smoking to lung cancer

Ranger VII takes first close-range photos of the moon

1965

Discovery of cosmic background radiation confirms the Big Bang theory

Vaccine against measles developed

Launch of Early Bird, the first commercial communications satellite

1966

Michael DeBakey implants the first artificial heart

Electronic fuel injection for cars invented

1967

Christiaan Barnard performs first successful human heart transplant

Pulsars and quarks are discovered

NASA launches 36-story Saturn V, America's largest rocket

1968

Computer mouse invented

Glomar Challenger begins 15 years of drilling deep-sea core samples

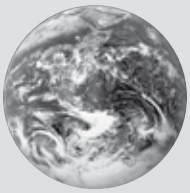
RAM (random access memory) technology invented

1969

Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walk on the moon (Apollo 11)

Concorde's first supersonic flight (700 mph, 1,127 kph)

Scanning electron microscopy technology developed



1970

First Earth Day celebrated in the United States

Human growth hormone synthesized

Floppy disk introduced for storing computer data

1971

Intel invents the microprocessor

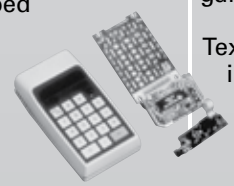
Electric currents shown to speed the healing of fractures

Dot-matrix printer invented

1972

Pong (first video game) invented

Texas Instruments introduces the hand-held calculator



ALL MILESTONE PHOTO CREDITS APPEAR ON PAGE 33

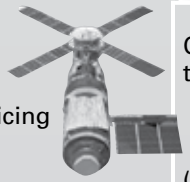
Pioneer 10 is the first human-created object to leave the solar system

CAT scan technology is developed in England

1973

Use of the pesticide DDT banned in the United States

Skylab is launched



Gene splicing invented

First commercial fax machines

1974

Smart card invented for storing and processing computer data

Chloroform banned in drugs and cosmetics as a suspected carcinogen

Discovery of "Lucy," a hominid more than 3 million years old

1975

Altair kit allows consumers to build and program their own PC

Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak design the Apple I

First monoclonal antibodies produced

Home videotape systems (VCRs) developed

Laser printer invented

Asilomar Conference held to discuss the potential risks of gene-splicing technology

1976

Cosmic string theory postulated

First Cray-1 supercomputer (160 megaflops / 8 megabyte memory); costs $8.8 million

Viking I lands on Mars

Ozone layer depletion linked to chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)

Apple II introduced, first computer with color graphic capabilities

1977

Gossamer Condor invented; the first successful human-powered aircraft

U.S. tests neutron bomb

Ink-jet printer invented

First optical-fiber phone lines

1978

A fusion reaction at Princeton reaches 60 million degrees F for 1/20 of a second

First test-tube baby born in England

Balloon angioplasty developed to treat coronary artery disease

1979

Discovery of deep-sea ocean vents

First laser printer copier

Core meltdown accident at Three Mile Island nuclear power plant

1980

Voyager I reaches Saturn

U.S. Supreme Court rules genetically-engineered organisms may be patented

Hepatitis-B vaccine invented

Scanning tunnel microscope developed

1981

First Space Shuttle flight

First AIDS cases recognized

First flight of the F-117A stealth aircraft

IBM introduces its first PC (runs on MS-DOS)

1982

Human growth hormone genetically engineered

Britain introduces MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) diagnostic machines

First artificial heart transplant

FDA approves commercial product of genetic engineering (human insulin)

Epson HX-20 laptop computer introduced

1983

Sally Ride becomes first U.S. woman in space

El Niño disrupts global weather patterns

Cellular phone service testing begins in Chicago

Compact disc introduced

1984

Particle accelerator at Fermilab reaches 800 billion electron volts

Evidence of the top quark announced

Genetic fingerprinting discovered

Entries compiled by Julie Kinyoun

Great Things Happening in New Haven

The Workshops Are Coming!

BY NANCY SHUTE

Plans for NASW workshops, part of ScienceWriters 2010 scheduled for Nov. 5-9, in New Haven, are in good shape, thanks to the concerted efforts of more than 100 NASW members. This spring workshop committee volunteers wrestled over which of the record 57 proposals would work best in one tight day of sessions. Using a Ning site the merits of proposals were debated. Our goal: relevant content, expert speakers, riveting presentations.

And we came up with a professional development lineup that we hope will meet the needs of our diverse membership as we create a robust future for science writing. Right now volunteer organizers whose proposals were accepted are in high gear, developing 16 sessions and several bonus events to fill Friday evening and all-day Saturday with as much content as possible. Highlights include:

- "Partners and ethics in the new media era," organized by Robin Lloyd of *Scientific American* and CASW President Cristine Russell. New models for science journalism are emerging, bringing fresh challenges in managing content partnerships with government agencies, businesses, and nonprofit organizations, as well as questions of how best to serve readers. What is the impact of these partnerships on the quality of science journalism and classic church/state independence lines? Are these relationships transparent enough? What are some examples of the best new models for online science journalism? The workshop's goal is a forward-looking, constructive discussion of how best to develop an online environment for science journalism that provides information to the public that is accurate, informative, and transparent.
- "Your next book will be a pixel: Navigating e-books and e-rights," organized by Steve Tally of Purdue University. E-books and digital rights leave many current and would-be authors with many paths and no good maps. What is the role of the editor and agent in the new territory? Is self-publishing now a real professional option? Do authors need to be coders, too? This panel brings together four of the nation's leading thinkers about e-books and digital rights to discuss what these dramatic changes mean for writers and the publishing industry.
- "The social web and online commenting: Making it work for journalism," organized by *Scientific American* contributing editor Christie Nicholson and including Teresa Neilsen Hayden, community manager at BoingBoing. It's a fact that writers and editors can no longer ignore: public online commenting continues to thrive and has become a hallmark of news. Today all media consumers expect to leave their opinion as much as they expect a doorway into a room. Yet, commenters are often overlooked, thought of as an afterthought or an annoyance. A top-notch panel will discuss the ways we can harness the power of the public's contribution, and how we can take the conversation beyond elite infighting and potential all-caps, name-calling matches to yield something more substantive and useful in science news.

Other workshop topics being developed:

- Navigating the new media landscape as a PIO
- Statistics made (somewhat) easier
- Getting the most out of scientific conferences, even if you aren't there
- Starting a freelance business and keeping it productive
- A look at how science writers outside North America cover climate change

Party Plans are In The Works

Robin Marantz Henig has once again volunteered to serve as impresario extraordinaire for the Science Cabaret, which was much missed in Austin. We'll celebrate NASW's 75th birthday and toast our futures at the Friday night cocktail party; a special celebration group of volunteers is into full-on party planning. Come ready to learn, network, and celebrate! ■

TREES BY PHOTODISC © 1995; YALE'S ARCHITECTURAL DETAIL COURTESY OF MICHAEL MARSLAND/YALE UNIVERSITY

This November

Hands-on sessions will give you the latest on data visualization, and inexpensive but effective video storytelling. Jeanne Erdmann will again be setting you up on speed dates with editors at a reprise of last year's popular Power Pitch session.

But it won't be all work and no play. Heeding members' requests for more schmoozing, there will be longer breaks between sessions and plenty of unstructured networking time. In addition, anniversary activities to celebrate NASW's 75th and CASW's 50th will continue throughout and offer opportunities to meet new colleagues as well as reconnect with old friends.

See who's coming at **www.sciencewriters2010.org**. ■

Nancy Shute is a freelance journalist and the NASW Workshop Committee chair. She can be reached at nshute@nasw.org.

■ ■ ■

Travel/Registration Support

Financial support to attend ScienceWriters 2010 is available to NASW members under a variety of funding opportunities.

Three travel fellowships are available:

■ NASW Freelance Travel Fellowship — Supported by the Authors Coalition of America fund, this fellowship provides some money to cover the costs of attending ScienceWriters 2010. Open to NASW members who are freelance writers.

■ NASW Graduate Travel Fellowship — Supported by the Authors Coalition of America fund, this fellowship provides some money to cover the costs of attending ScienceWriters 2010. Open to current NASW student members enrolled in a science writing program.

■ CASW Traveling Fellowship — Intended primarily for journalists from publications and broadcast outlets that do not routinely cover major science meetings or employ a full-time science writer.

Potential fellowship applicants should watch for details at **www.sciencewriters2010.org**.

In addition, NASW student members can receive free registration by serving as workshop volunteers. E-mail workshop@nasw.org to express your interest. ■

■ ■ ■

Conference Connections

Twitter **@SciWri10**
Facebook **www.facebook.com/pages/ScienceWriters/84486282765**
ScienceWriters 2010 **www.sciencewriters2010.org**
NASW **www.nasw.org**
New Horizons in Science **www.casw.org/new-horizons**

New Horizons in Science

by Paul Raeburn

At this year's New Horizons in Science—two-and-a-half days of science briefings and lab visits during ScienceWriters 2010—researchers from Yale and around the country will describe how a developing fetus resembles a developing cancer tumor; talk about stem cells, autism, and deep-brain stimulation; and explore the science of conflict, green chemistry, and political behavior. Evolutionary biologist Sean B. Carroll will be there, as will a few other surprise guests.

The meeting also includes a special symposium celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing, which develops and funds programs (such as New Horizons) to help reporters and writers produce accurate and informative stories about developments in science, technology, medicine, and the environment. Organized by Alan Boyle, Charlie Petit, and Tom Siegfried, the symposium will include leaders in physics, biology, and the environment talking about what they expect researchers in their fields to learn during the next 50 years. Participants will include pioneering biologist Lee Hood, director of the Institute for Systems Biology in Seattle; Michael Turner, a theorist at the University of Chicago whose research straddles elementary particle physics, cosmology, and astrophysics; and Ralph Cicerone, an atmospheric scientist, specialist on climate change, and current president of the National Academy of Sciences.

The schedule for ScienceWriters 2010—including the complete New Horizons in Science program—will be posted August 4. ■

Paul Raeburn is organizer of the CASW New Horizons in Science briefings. He can be reached at paulraeburn@nasw.org.

"It won't be all work and no play…there will be longer breaks between sessions and plenty of unstructured networking time."

NASW CONTACTS

National Association of Science Writers, Inc.
P.O. Box 7905
Berkeley, CA 94707
Phone 510-647-9500
www.nasw.org

STAFF

Executive Director
Tinsley Davis, director@nasw.org

NASW Cybrarian
Russell Clemings, cybrarian@nasw.org

Workshops Coordinator
Tinsley Davis, workshops@nasw.org

***ScienceWriters* Editor**
Lynne Friedmann, editor@nasw.org

OFFICERS

President
Mariette DiChristina, dichristin@aol.com
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BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE

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Freelance

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Freelance

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symmetry

Terry Devitt, trdevitt@wisc.edu
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Dan Ferber, ferber@nasw.org
Freelance

Bob Finn, finn@nasw.org
Int'l Medical News Group

Robin Marantz Henig, robinhenig@nasw.org
Freelance

Tom Paulson, tom.a.paulson@gmail.com
Freelance

Tabitha M. Powledge, tam@nasw.org
Freelance

Vikki Valentine, valentinevikki@gmail.com
NPR Online

Mitch Waldrop, m.waldrop@naturedc.com
Nature

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

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**Student member*

GRAD PROGRAM

continued from page 4

be on training students in online and entrepreneurial journalism.

As we currently envision it, the program's centerpiece will be a website on which students will produce regular copy on local, regional, and national science stories. (I wish I were there now with a gaggle of students to unleash on the Gulf oil-spill story.)

We hope and expect that the FAU science-writing news site will become a community resource as well as a university asset. The idea is to give students an experience as close to professional writing as possible. I have little interest in training students for jobs that are disappearing or don't exist. I want to give students rich and rigorous instruction and experience in writing, reporting, and new technology—and equip them with the skills they need to get jobs when they graduate.

We will begin recruiting students in the fall of 2011. We expect that some students will arrive with backgrounds in science; others with backgrounds in writing. An individual program of instruction will be developed for each student—writers will be directed to science courses and scientists to writing courses.

FAU has given me a lot of freedom in designing the program. I'll be looking for suggestions from NASW members about what should be done to make this a top-notch experience. I'll also be counting on you to refer potential applicants. I'll seek your input and discussion online once I establish the program's presence on the FAU website.

I'm also looking forward to welcoming guest speakers, either science writers in Florida, or those of you traveling in the area.

And Perlman—you're welcome anytime. ■

GRANTS

continued from page 5

Freelance **Nancy Lamontagne**'s ability to cover travel expenses to the 2009 Society for Neuroscience conference, in Chicago, made it possible for her to take on a blogging assignment at the meeting for *Microscopy and Analysis* magazine.

"I was glad to get more blogging experience and to spend time working with the magazine's staff at the conference," she said.

In addition, Lamontagne reconnected with individuals she'd worked with in the past and networked with potential new clients.

"I let people know about the blog I author, which has helped increase visitors," she said. "I came away from the conference with new connections and excited about the new technology I saw."

A career development grant allowed Bob Roehr to attend the 2009 National HIV Prevention Conference, in Atlanta; the CDC's premiere event in the field.

"I was able to provide news coverage for the gay and HIV communities, which are underserved by the mainstream media," he said.

Roehr also attended a first-of-its-kind meeting of "HIV controllers" and researchers, held in San Francisco. Controllers are persons whose immune systems are somehow able to hold HIV in check for extended periods of time. Understanding this is thought to be crucial to making the next breakthroughs in treating and perhaps preventing the disease. The access resulted in an article for *Scientific American* online that was featured on the Digg home page.

"I'm working on other articles, have conducted additional interviews, and have made a long-term commitment to following this story," Roehr said.

Linda Roach acquired graphics and web-design savvy as a result of her NASW support. Not only has this helped her stretch and garner "clips," but she now feels "comfortable talking about the same old skills I used in newspapers, but with a computer-driven language."

Recently, Roach applied her Dreamweaver skills

in support of the Mensa Annual Gathering, in Dearborn, Mich., as editor to the design artist who conceived logos, ads, layouts, and promotional buttons and T-shirts for the meeting.

Roach, who will co-chair publicity/marketing efforts for the 2011 Mensa Annual Gathering in Portland, Ore., is also using the knowledge of social media, gained through her new technology awareness, to work with Mensa's tech staff as they conceptualize outreach efforts for next year's meeting, such as geotagged walking maps, beer guides, bike routes.

"I never would have paid any attention to this, or acquired the knowledge to go forward with it without NASW," she said. "In short, NASW's support was just what I needed to get me started on a road that I really had avoided prior to this." ■

E-MAILING

continued from page 6

range chickens on the streets of New York, were also more likely to be e-mailed—which was a hardly a surprising discovery, of course. But the researchers also kept finding popular articles with a quality that went beyond surprise.

"If I went into my classroom dressed up like a pirate, that would be surprising, but it wouldn't be awe-inspiring," Dr. Berger said. "An article about square watermelons is surprising, but it doesn't inspire that awed feeling that the world is a broad place and I'm so small."

Building on prior research, the Penn researchers defined the quality as an "emotion of self-transcendence, a feeling of admiration and elevation in the face of something greater than the self."

They used two criteria for an awe-inspiring story: Its scale is large, and it requires "mental accommodation" by forcing the reader to view the world in a different way.

"It involves the opening and broadening of the mind," write Dr. Berger and Dr. Milkman, who is a behavioral economist at Wharton.

"Seeing the Grand Canyon, standing in front of a beautiful piece of art, hearing a grand theory, or listening to a beautiful symphony may all inspire awe. So may the revelation of something profound and important in something you may have once seen as ordinary or routine, or seeing a causal connection between important things and seemingly remote causes."

The motivation for mailing these awe-inspiring articles is not as immediately obvious as with other kinds of articles, Dr. Berger said. Sharing recipes or financial tips or medical advice makes sense according to classic economic utility theory: I give you something of practical value in the hope that you'll someday return the favor. There can also be self-interested reasons for sharing surprising articles: I get to show off how well informed I am by sending news that will shock you.

But why send someone an exposition on quantum mechanics? In some cases, it, too, could be a way of showing off, particularly if you accompanied the article with a note like, "Perhaps this will amuse, although of course it's a superficial treatment. Why can't they use Schrödinger's full equation?"

But in general, people who share this kind of article seem to have loftier motives than trying to impress their friends. They're seeking emotional communion, Dr. Berger said.

"Emotion in general leads to transmission, and awe is quite a strong emotion," he said. "If I've just read this story that changes the way I understand the world and myself, I want to talk to others about what it means. I want to proselytize and share the feeling of awe. If you read the article and feel the same emotion, it will bring us closer together."

The Penn researchers found evidence of readers' sharing other emotions, too, like anxiety—which, based on the old "fear sells" theory of journalism, might be expected to be the most influential emotion on readers. But of all the variables studied, Dr. Berger said, awe had the strongest relationship with an article making the most-e-mailed list, and that finding strikes me as a high compliment to the *Times* audience.

In fact, Dear Reader, you could consider this new study to be firm scientific evidence of your own awesomeness. And if you want to share that feeling with anyone, you know what to do next. ■

"Viral Science Stories," New York Times*, Feb. 8, 2010.*

SCHOLARLY

continued from page 9

argue; and "have not explicitly considered news coverage of clinical science as a social product nor have they examined scientists' expectations of the uses to which audiences would put communicated research findings." The authors contend that only by understanding news coverage of cancer research as a social construct negotiated between scientists, public information officers, and the media can one actually make sense of what the public learns about cancer research.

To better understand this social construction, the team focused on one (anonymous) of the National Cancer Institute's 40 Comprehensive Cancer Centers, located at a research institution in the United States. They conducted in-depth interviews with stakeholders associated with many aspects of cancer research at the center. In all, the study analyzed data from 20 in-depth stakeholder interviews: seven with scientists in the center, four with communication professionals from the institution within which the center was situated, four with communication professionals from key funding organizations and scientific journals, and five with health and science journalists who were in a position to cover research produced by scientists from the center. Media interviewed included a health correspondent for a major national cable news service; a reporter from a national wire service who was assigned to cover health issues; and a journalist for a major U.S. daily newspaper whose beat included health topics, as well as two journalists who cover health and science for the major daily newspaper local to the center.

These disparate stakeholders, Smith et al. found, all superficially shared a common goal: "[T]he stakeholders all expressed support for the idea of seeking news coverage for cancer research," they write. But then the motivations and expectations from public communication of the center's research started to diverge. "Our analysis reveals both considerable support for mediated communication of cancer science and substantial tensions as to what constituted news, who such stories should be told to, and with what goal in mind," they explain. "The lack of clearly articulated overall objectives for cancer communication meant that descriptions of the process and place for such communication from the various stakeholders revealed considerable potential contradictions."

Scientists, for example, "prioritized providing useable information—specific, conclusive findings that people can use to inform their prevention and treatment decisions—as the primary goal for communicating with the news media. Educating the public about the 'big picture' related to cancer research served as an important secondary goal for this group." Another major motivator for the scientists and science managers in the study was the belief that success stories in the media would generate more funding for cancer research.

PIOs, for their part, also described value in enhancing public understanding of the incremental nature of scientific progress. "In essence," the authors explain, "stakeholders who are involved in producing and communicating cancer research findings [see] value in framing discussion of newsworthy findings within a larger context of overall scientific progress."

And the reporters? "Unlike the scientists and communication specialists, journalists did not talk in general terms about public education about science," Smith et al. say; "the work of constructing a story included determining whether people will care about a story and how to convey this to the audience. Similar to the scientists' concern with educating the public, journalists' accounts of getting people to care tended not to include any discussion of 'to what end?"

The lack of concern about what people actually do with cancer research they read or hear about seemed to characterize all the stakeholders, the study found. "Scientists essentially conceptualized a one-way framework for scientific communication and did not refer to feedback from recipients of their messages to either their own work or even the communication of findings in the future. None of the stakeholder groups regularly articulated conceptualizations of what people might do with the information that they received." ■

MILESTONES

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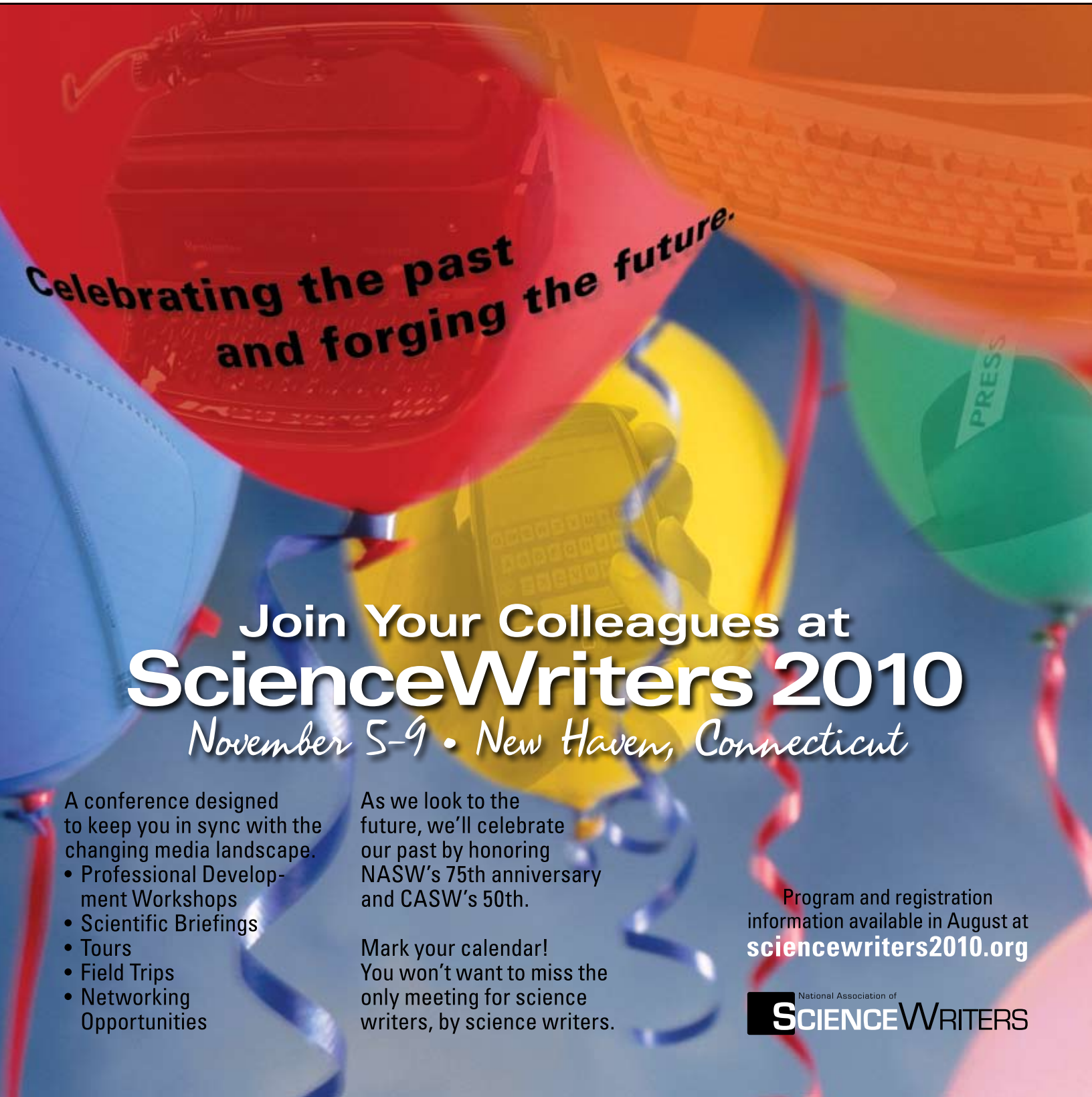

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- Scientific Briefings
- Tours
- Field Trips
- Networking Opportunities

As we look to the future, we'll celebrate our past by honoring NASW's 75th anniversary and CASW's 50th.

Mark your calendar! You won't want to miss the only meeting for science writers, by science writers.

Program and registration information available in August at **sciencewriters2010.org**

National Association of SCIENCE WRITERS