

ScienceWriters™

National Association
of Science Writers, Inc.

Winter
2018-19

CZERNE REID
RECEIVES DIANE
MCGURGAN
AWARD

ANNUAL
SALUTE
TO NASW VOLUNTEERS

EDITOR
LYNNE FRIEDMANN'S
FINAL
ISSUE

VICTOR K. McELHENY
AWARD
LAUDS LOCAL AND REGIONAL
SCIENCE JOURNALISM

NASW PARTNERS
WITH NATIONAL WRITERS
UNION

SCIENCE WRITERS
ANSWER THE CALL FOR
COMMUNITY
SERVICE

SW2018
RECAP

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Branch of Colorado blue spruce (*Picea pungens*) covered with hoarfrost © Maryna Lipatova; Intertwined computer wire © Steve Johnson

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SCIENCEWRITERS™

EST. 1934

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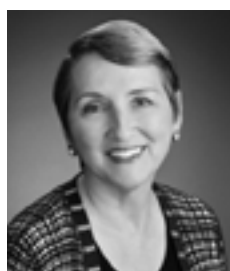
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ScienceWriters is produced by NASW with financial support from the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing.

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



Lynne Friedmann



Sarah Nightingale

FROM THE EDITORS

This co-edited issue of ScienceWriters represents a passing of the baton.

After 19 years as editor, Lynne Friedmann puts this issue to bed in order to enthusiastically pursue book writing. Learn about her plans on page 6.

Digital and print editor Sarah Nightingale is one of two new hires under an expanded communication effort; the other is social media engagement editor Ben Young Landis. Learn about their plans to hit the ground running on page 7.

Elsewhere in this issue: news of an exciting partnership between NASW and the National Writers Union; the election of five NASW members as AAAS fellows; and a new award for outstanding science journalism at the local or regional level. The latter named after NASW member and founder of the Knight Science Journalism at MIT, Victor K. McElheny.

The new Bruce V. Bigelow Memorial Science Communication Fellowship offers early career science writers unapparelled nine-month interdisciplinary communication training in health sciences, oceanography, and engineering.

Highlighted in the SW2018 recap is training, networking, and camaraderie. In fact, Lynne and Sarah started planning this issue at that meeting. It's been a great collaboration. ■

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Partnership Brings National Writers Union Benefits to NASW Members

Thanks to the work of the freelance committee, NASW members now qualify for discount membership to the National Writers Union (NWU). This cooperative agreement allows NASW members to receive the advice, power, and backing of NWU in resolving payment disputes with publishers. NWU, a fellow member of the Authors Coalition, is the only labor union that represents freelance writers working in all genres, formats, and mediums.

“This unique partnership marries NASW’s commitment to supporting its members’ freelance careers and NWU’s ability to negotiate for improved professional working conditions for writers,” said Kendall Powell, freelance committee co-chair and board member.

Membership includes access to NWU’s expertise to resolve payment disputes; negotiate contracts; secure international press passes for freelancers; promote books; and find health, dental, and vision insurance, among other benefits.

For several years, NASW grievance committee volunteers pursued publishers to make good on payments due to aggrieved members. The practice ceased in 2010 due to legal and tax concerns that could jeopardize NASW’s not-for-profit status. Since then, the freelance committee has been doggedly pursuing other ways that NASW freelance writers could obtain grievance assistance.

In 2017, a group grievance, which included eight NASW members, was negotiated by NWU against *Nautilus* magazine to resolve non-payment issues. In conjunction with NWU’s actions, the NASW board send its own letter (bit.ly/2G2KO3j) to *Nautilus* publisher John Steele urging payment to writers owed money for published work.

After hearing from Alla Katsnelson of the details of NWU’s successful efforts to collect from *Nautilus*, Powell floated the idea with NWU President Larry Goldbetter for a “grievance partnership” between NASW and NWU.



Goldbetter was both receptive to collaborating and finding a creative solution. Following a series of phone calls in 2018, NASW became an “organizational member” of NWU paving the way for NASW members to avail themselves of NWU benefits starting this year.

From Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2019, any non-student NASW member in good standing can obtain an NWU membership at the discounted rate of \$150. Go to nwu.org/join-now and select the \$150 annual rate. IMPORTANT: Be sure to indicate “NASW” in the box labeled How Did You Hear About Us. Continuation of the partnership in future years will be based on the level of NASW member participation.

In addition, the agreement allows 25 NASW members to access NWU’s grievance and contract negotiation services for free on a first-come, first-served basis. This is designed for members who have a documented grievance, contract dispute, or tricky contract negotiation with a client but cannot afford the discount NWU membership. If you have a grievance, email grievance@nasw.org with a brief description and a member of NASW’s grievance subcommittee will contact you to discuss NWU’s eligibility guidelines.

Many thanks to freelance committee members Emily Anthes, Katherine Bourzac, Jennifer Frazer, Jennifer Huber, Kendall Powell, and Ramin Skibba for their individual and collective efforts to make this unique partnership a reality. ■



ScienceWriters2018 *Recap*

As science writers and NASW members, we know our strength lies in our numbers. This was certainly true of ScienceWriters2018. The conference enticed a record 820 participants to the nation's capital on Oct. 12-16; more than double conference attendance a decade ago. ■ Our hosts at George Washington University did a tremendous job of guiding us through a packed schedule that included NASW professional development workshops, CASW New Horizons in Science briefings, lab tours, field trips, and an awards reception. ■ The following are select workshop briefs reported by NASW travel fellows. Additional conference coverage at bit.ly/2GdgUcJ.



Should Science Writers be Responsible for Building Public Trust in Science?

BY MATT BLOIS

Politicians and celebrities who doubt the credibility of science can undermine the scientific process and encourage the public to stop trusting scientists.

Science writers can play a role in building public support for science, but is that their responsibility?

Two teams of science writers debated the topic before a live audience. Much of the debate revolved around the differences

between covering science as a journalist and communicating science for an institution.

NPR's Richard Harris and *Buzzfeed*'s Nidhi Subbaraman argued that science writers are not cheerleaders for science. They said it's their job to tell the public what's happening in science whether or not that builds public trust.

"Our role is to report fiercely and fairly on the institution itself," Subbaraman said. "The enterprise and its actors through their actions and record must earn our trust themselves."

Science communicators Louise Lief and Rick Weiss argued that science writers shouldn't avoid writing stories that show the failures of science but encouraged writers to look for ways to build trust in the process of science.

"Your job is not to hide the problems," Lief said. "The ultimate goal is the appreciation of and support for the systematic approach to knowledge and discovery that science represents when it's at its best."

At the start of the debate, about 60 percent of the audience

MATT BLOIS IS A FREELANCE SCIENCE WRITER BASED IN BRENTWOOD, TENN.



Annual Meeting . Workshops . Awards . Lectures Briefings . Lab Tours . Exhibits . Fellowship

▲ Science in Society, Excellence in Institutional Writing, and Victor Cohn Prize winners

◀ "Special" edition of *ScienceWriters* presented to Lynne Friedmann

► Siri Carpenter presenting McGurgan Service Award to Czerne Reid

▲ All eyes on Richard Harris (and his socks) during a panel discussion.

▲ "I survived my first meeting as an NASW board member."

► Everyone's friend: Diane McGurgan

agreed that science writers are responsible for building public trust in science. By the end, that number had dropped to about 40 percent.

Harris and Subbaraman focused on the science writer's role as a watchdog. An audience question from freelance writer Jill Adams asked whether political reporters are responsible for building public trust in democracy.

"Are sports writers responsible for building trust in sports? How about business writers, are they responsible for building public trust in businesses? I think not," Harris said. "What makes us different as science writers? I argue there is no difference."

Weiss called that a bad example because he said science is about pursuing absolute truth, while democracy isn't.

Science writers have an obligation to tell true, compelling stories about science, but Harris said that journalists, public information officers, and other communicators often have different goals.

Despite those differences, Harris and Subbaraman pointed out

Engaging the Changing Faces and Voices of Mass Media

BY TERE CASTRO-SALDANA

Communicating Ciencia II: Engaging the Changing Faces and Voices of Mass Media was the theme for a highly anticipated session on recognizing the scientific world and its humanity. Panelists agreed it is time for journalists and writers to accept Latinx audiences as part of the U.S. mainstream, as corporate America has done.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, currently there are about

TERE CASTRO-SALDANA IS A PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO.

Constitution and Bylaws Amendments Vote Results

Results of the recent vote on two proposed amendments to the NASW constitution and bylaws are in. The measure to change the eligibility criteria of board officers to allow non-journalists to serve did not pass. A measure to increase the signature requirement on petitions from the general membership calling for an amendment vote was approved. The final vote tallies shown below:

Amendment to Article IV, Section I (Officers)

Yay: 345

Nay: 536

Abstain: 30

While a majority of voting NASW members do not favor a change in officer eligibility, the board recognizes that we as a community have problems that still need solutions. In recent years, the board has addressed several issues of representation and recognition of the organization's varied constituencies but knows there is more work to be done to serve all NASW members and uphold our shared mission.

Amendment to Article IX, Section 2 (Constitutional and Bylaws Amendments)

Yay: 599

Nay: 199

Abstain: 108

The passage of the 5 percent membership threshold for petition signatories and a 90-day advance period for proposing new amendments brings NASW in line with norms across similar organizations and government bodies while maintaining a democratic option for members to propose new amendments.

■ ■ ■

Nine hundred eleven (911) NASW members voted online by proxy, by mail, or in person at the NASW annual business meeting in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 13, 2018. Voter participation was 40 percent of NASW's 2,370 eligible members. Counting of the ballots was done by six (non-voting) student member volunteers. ■

48.6 million Spanish speakers in the United States, and the number is expected to reach some 119 million by 2060.

Panelists discussed how they each individually convey science concepts, research, and stories to different Spanish speaking audiences. The panel was organized and moderated by Ben Young Landis, writer-creator of cr8txt, and Becky Oskin, science writer from UC Davis. Panelists were: Jenny F. de la Hoz, Ph.D., social scientist and facilitator equity consultant at the Center for Equity Inclusion in Oregon; Jose G. Gonzalez, science educator at Latino Outdoors; and Claudia Pineda Tibbs, conservation and science planning and operations manager at the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

"As science journalists and science writers we have the duty to reflect the humanity of the readers we serve," said Young Landis. "And that means understanding how to bridge contexts with the changing faces and voices of the U.S. public."

Collectively, the speakers all have extensive experience in science outreach in their respective fields. Pineda Tibbs offered pro tips on leveraging social media and other types of technology and explained how this can help you better understand your Latinx audience.

SW2018 RECAP: MASS MEDIA continued on page 33

We've Got the Beat: How to Create an Area of Expertise as a Science Writer

BY STEPHANIE PARKER

What are the benefits of having a beat in science journalism? What are the drawbacks?

And how do you become an established beat reporter in a certain area?

These are some of the questions tackled by the We've Got the Beat: How to Create an Area of Expertise as a Science Writer panel moderated by Cori Vanchieri of *Science News*. The four-person panel offered perspectives on beat reporting from a print journalist, radio journalist, freelancer, and a public information officer (PIO).

The format was Q&A from an online survey along with audience questions. Panelists discussed the many benefits of having a beat, such as cultivating strong, long-term relationships with sources, which can lead to unique and interesting stories.

"It's about being in the right place, knowing who to talk to," said panelist Jon Hamilton, a science correspondent for NPR covering, among other things, the neuroscience and environmental health beats.

Tina Hesman Saey, who covers the molecular biology beat as a senior writer at *Science News*, added that she gets sources in her field to come to her with interesting research and stories by explicitly asking them to. Chanapa Tantibanchachai, a senior media relations representative at Johns Hopkins Medicine, recommended that PIOs go to relevant faculty meetings to find sources in their beats.

STEPHANIE PARKER IS A FREELANCE SCIENCE WRITER BASED IN SILVAPLANA, SWITZERLAND.

Speakers also discussed the drawbacks of having a beat. One audience member asked about the possibility of getting stuck in a niche so specialized that it's hard to branch out. Freelancer Rebecca Boyle, whose beats include astronomy, physics, deep time, and climate change, talked about the "FOMO" (fear of missing out) of not getting to write certain stories, like covering the recent IPCC climate report.

Audience members learned some fun information about how panelists chose, or fell into, their beats. Boyle, for example, moved from political to science writer after reporting on birth control for geese as part of a local government story. She ended up pitching it as a more focused science piece to *Popular Science* and never looked back.

Panelists also discussed what a "typical" day in the life of a science beat writer looks like (hint: there isn't one). There were insightful conversations about what it means to be a trained scientist who has moved into the communications field. Hesman Saey mentioned the importance of remembering who you're writing for and keeping in mind that you need to write science not for another scientist, but for your non-scientist neighbor. After a comment from "double-agent" scientist and freelance writer audience member Doug Fields—that every scientist has been burned by a journalist who didn't get the facts right—Hamilton stressed the importance of double and triple checking complicated concepts with your scientist sources.

Session attendees left with a lot to consider, whether or not to pursue a beat, best practices for writing great science, and how to cultivate a beat of one's own.

Yes, You Can Tame the Beast That is Twitter

BY MIRJAM GUESGEN

Moderator Alison Gillespie thinks her session on optimizing Twitter for science communication should have been named "Taming the Beast" because of the barrage of content that is posted on the social media platform.

It's a sentiment shared by the panelists, who described Twitter as "a firehose" and "overwhelming at best, a cesspool at worst." After an informative hour and a half, attendees came away feeling as if they've put a harness on the beast, even if it is still a wild animal at heart.

For those looking to take a more filtered approach to Twitter, Carmen Drahl, former senior editor of *Chemical Engineering News*, let attendees in on a little-known secret: Twitter lists.

"You can get what you want out of Twitter faster and ignore the stuff you don't," she said. Users can curate lists of people or topics and only view the tweets they're interested in at that moment or get an organized snapshot of their timeline using an app like Hootsuite or Tweetdeck.

Twitter lists are also a way to be a little sneaky. Drahl highlighted the ability to add people to private lists and essentially follow them secretly; perfect for journalists wanting to snoop on their competitors or to indulge in that less-professional-but-still-

really-fun interest (royal family fashion anyone?).

Lists are an excellent resource for story ideas and sources, too. Drahl shared what she calls influencer lists of experts in a particular field, curated by respected journalists. These experts, or influencers, share relevant papers in their field or topics they're debating.

But there are other ways to sort through the chaos that is the Twitter feed. Lauren Lipuma noticed that tweets from her organization, the American Geophysical Union (AGU), would get more pickup if they had visual elements to them. So, she turned to Canva, a sort of online Photoshop for dummies.

Lipuma scrolled through slides of AGU's recent posts to illustrate Canva's utility. Some examples were quotes embedded in a clean, on-brand color palette and fun Earth and space facts spliced with eye-catching images. Her presentation was more inspirational than how-to but did generate several follow-up questions and an impromptu lesson over lunch.

Perhaps one of the most off-putting aspects of Twitter, the teeth and claws of the beast so to speak, is the negativity that comes along with it. That's why freelancer Lesley Evans Ogden makes it a point to use the platform to spread tips, opportunities and resources for fellow freelancers. Humor and kindness, she said, "in part compensates for all the nastiness."

As a one-woman shop, Evans Ogden doesn't spend time on frivolous endeavors. "I don't have the bandwidth," she said. She explained that Twitter is essential for freelancers, not only to promote their work, but to form working relationships with editors and other writers. Her biggest success story was when she direct-messaged BBC Earth to ask if it worked with freelancers. Those few seconds of typing lead to several years writing for the outlet.

All panelists emphasized that optimizing Twitter is not about the number of followers you have. For Drahl, her favorite moments are stepping into conversations. "It's a public water cooler," she said.

Gillespie agreed: "If you go to a party you don't come home and say, 'It was great, I met 62 people.' You talk about the mind-blowing conversations you had."

For good or for bad, Twitter is a place for discussion, all agreed.

Oh, Now I Get It: Training Scientists to Communicate Clearly

BY ÖZGE ÖZKAYA

How do you persuade a scientist to engage with the public? This was the topic of the Oh, Now I Get It workshop. The panel included Robin Smith, science writer at Duke University; Shane Hanlon from AGU's sharing science program; Adam Connor-Simons, communications and media relations officer at Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and Mario Aguilera, the director of communications at UC San Diego. Session organizers were Alisa Machalek, senior science writer at the National Institutes of Health, and Laura Perry, director of communications at UCLA School of Nursing.

SW2018 RECAP: TRAINING continued on page 33

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ÖZGE ÖZKAYA IS A MANAGING EDITOR OF LANDING PAGES FOR BIONEWS SERVICES, TURKEY.

Farewell From the Outgoing Editor

BY LYNNE FRIEDMANN

Life-changing events can happen in quiet moments. In 1988, an ad little more than the size of a postage stamp appeared on the back page of *ScienceWriters* seeking a contributing writer. I threw my hat in the ring and, a phone call later, editor Howard Lewis gave me the gig. Little did I know this would be the start of a 30-year association with the publication.

At the time, I was early in my career and had been a member of NASW a mere two years. My initial assignments for the newsletter were prosaic write-ups on fellowship opportunities and the technological marvel of VNRs (video news releases).

Reporting on the NCSWA party at the 1989 AAAS meeting in San Francisco, I turned in lengthy, cliché-ridden copy about the Tenderloin district dive in which the party took place. Howard's red pencil quickly dispatched my sluggish effort with: "The bash was held in an outré establishment called The Oasis." I had a lot to learn about editing.

I graduated to feature articles then became Our Gang columnist for many years. A decade later, I was managing editor.

*Unstinting with their time
and talent in support
of the magazine has been
a who's who of columnists,
assistant/managing editors,
and other contributors.*

In the spring of 2000, Howard retired as editor and recommended to the NASW board that I take his place. The offer came as a quick conversation with Paul Raeburn who left the board meeting to track me down between news briefings I was moderating at that year's AAAS annual meeting. I nodded acceptance and turned to escort the next speakers to the dais.

As much as I enjoy writing, I truly love editing. It's where the rubber meets the road and it is a privilege to work with writers to develop story ideas, provide direction, and edit copy always with the goal of maintaining the author's unique voice.

In 2008, I took on the ambitious challenge of turning the then newsletter into a four-color magazine. Success would not have been possible without the brilliant creative work of Carol Kerr and Jennifer Buckner of Carol Kerr Graphic Design (the award-winning team whose association with the publication dates to the days of editor Howard Lewis) and the support of the NASW board and executive director Tinsley Davis.

Speaking of the board, during my tenure as editor I have served under nearly as many NASW presidents as Queen Elizabeth II has had prime ministers. I wish to acknowledge Deborah Blum, Siri Carpenter, Mariette DiChristina, Laura Helmuth, Robin Marantz Henig, Robert Lee Hotz, Joe Palca, Paul Raeburn, Nancy Shute, Laura van Dam, and Ron

Winslow for giving me incredible support and editorial freedom to make the publication what it is today.

Unstinting with their time and talent in support of the magazine has been a who's who of contributors, first and foremost columnists and assistant/managing editors. Thank you from the bottom of my heart to Michael Balter, Julian Block, Rick Borchelt, Ben Carollo, Suzanne Clancy, Russ Clemings, Tinsley Davis, Jim Cornell, Bob Finn, Jeff Grabmeier, Pam Frost Gorder, Craig Hicks, Earle Holland, Lynne Lamberg, Dennis Meredith, Tammy Powledge, Joann Rodgers, Diana Steele, Leslie Willoughby, and Ruth Winter. Special thanks to proof-reader Judy Schwartz who saved my bacon on numerous occasions.

Also, a shout out to Ben Patrusky and Ros Reid of CASW for financial support for the publication, teamwork on numerous joint NASW-CASW efforts, and the barrels of fun we've had along the way. And what can I say about Diane McGurgan who has had my back—and busted my chops—for three decades. Everyone should be blessed with that kind of friendship.

My best wishes to new editors Sarah Nightingale and Ben Young Landis as they advance the ball on NASW's digital, print, and social media engagement initiatives.

I am grateful to NASW members for their loyalty as readers, insightful suggestions, outstanding cover photo submissions, kind words about my efforts, and criticism when it was deserved. Not only have I gotten to know members via their contributions to the magazine, but also through my service on various committees, the board, as a session organizer at ScienceWriters conferences, co-chair of the Cross-Border Science Journalism Workshop, and the organizing committee for WCSJ2017. Great times. Enduring friendships.

Of course, being editor of *ScienceWriters* wasn't my only job. Over the course of my career, I have been a PIO, freelance writer, science communications consultant, conference reporter, newspaper columnist, blogger, and science-writing instructor. My experience as editor of *ScienceWriters* made me better in all these assignments.

It is bittersweet to step down as editor, but it is also time to move on. Officially, I am retired but a nagging itch to pursue book writing will keep me busier than ever.

In line with that ambitious goal, my first official retirement act has been to join a book club. ■



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Meet the New Editors

In response to surveys revealing members are interested in more, and better, digital communications, NASW has hired two new editors to expand the association's current communications program and explore new ways to digitally engage with members.

Sarah Nightingale, Digital and Print Editor (sweditor@nasw.org)

A freelance writer and editor, Sarah brings to her role as NASW digital/print editor a wealth of experience in creating, managing, and sharing content for digital and print communications. She has more than a decade of experience in news reporting and PR, most recently as a PIO at the University of California, Riverside, as well as five years in an international setting as communications manager/senior editor for Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar. She holds a Ph.D. in molecular microbiology and immunology from the University of Southern California, a master's in journalism and mass communication from Kansas State University, and a B.S. in biochemistry from Imperial College, London, UK.

Ben Young Landis, Social Media Engagement Editor (socialmedia@nasw.org)

Ben is a writer, creative consultant, and trainer with roots in environmental management and ecology. He has worked as a field biologist, a newspaper journalist, and as a public outreach specialist with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Ben holds a B.A. in evolution and ecology from UC Davis and a master's degree in environmental economics and policy from Duke University. He is a founding member of the regional science-writing group CapSciComm in Sacramento, Calif. Ben brings his experience in writing and communications consulting and the services of his collective, Creative Externalities, to NASW in this new role.

NASW's social media presence:

Twitter followers 22,000+

Facebook followers 6,000+



Ben Young Landis and Sarah Nightingale at SW2018 in D.C.

NEW NASW COMMUNICATION PLAN

How will the expanded role of the digital and print editor coordinate content across the spectrum?

Sarah: In a way, digital and print media are like siblings, only one is a lot more precocious. They're similar because good content, good writing, and good design are important on either platform. My job is like parenting these two siblings and fostering a good relationship between them. We're well into the digital age now and audiences—our members included—expect more and better digital communications. Before I joined the team in November, NASW began addressing this need by redesigning the website with a focus on better navigation and usability. We also launched a digital newsletter in January and will be redesigning *ScienceWriters* magazine this year and looking for new ways to feature magazine content online. Going forward, my goal is to work with Ben to coordinate content across our platforms to make sure our members get the most out of NASW.

What can members expect in the online newsletter? How will it impact the content and frequency of the print magazine?

Sarah: The digital newsletter will be sent out monthly, which will help us connect members with the latest news, announcements, and offerings in the most convenient way—through their computers, tablets and phones.

While there's no denying the thirst for more digital communications, print magazines continue to be as relevant as ever for engaged audiences—say, for example, a tight-knit community like NASW. As we redirect some of our most time sensitive and interactive content online, the frequency of *ScienceWriters* magazine will be reduced from four print issues per year to two. As NASW's flagship publication of more than 60 years, *ScienceWriters* will continue to serve as the organization's publication of record and the place for in-depth communications about the craft of science writing.

Regarding social media engagement with members, what are the goals and deliverables for this new initiative?

Ben: NASW has had a Twitter and Facebook presence since 2011. Because the number of non-member followers on both social media platforms far outpaces NASW members (Twitter 22,000+; Facebook 6,000+) it is important that we communicate our mission and reinforce our identity. Therefore, social media efforts moving forward will leverage more strategic branding and calls for participation, to better showcase our community spirit and our amazing NASW resources (#WhySciWri). We not only want to remind everyone of the services, grants, and benefits available to us as NASW members, but also inform others on the national and global landscape that NASW is a vibrant, supportive network of science writing professionals and students.

What happens to the Cybrarian who previously served as web editor and managed NASW's Twitter and Facebook accounts?

Sarah and Ben: Lucky for us Russ Clemings remains an integral part of nasw.org in the Cybrarian role of maintaining the membership database, site upgrades, and myriad member service functions on the internet. We and all NASW members owe him a debt of gratitude for his leadership and oversight in shepherding the recent redesign of the NASW website. ■

Science Writers Giving Back

[Editor's note: In following the careers of science writers, I have come across ways in which they are diligently and creatively giving back to their communities and the wider world. Here are a few inspiring examples worthy of our admiration.—LF]



Champa and David Jarmul ready for their assignment after Peace Corps training.

DAVID JARMUL

Peace Corps volunteer 1977-79 (Nepal) and 2016-18 (Moldova). He chronicled his recent Peace Corps experiences on his blog Not Exactly Retired (notexactlyretired.com/tag/david-jarmul).

Joining the Peace Corps helped me appreciate how good I'd had it as a science writer in the United States.

Back when I ran the news office at Duke University, my team included two writers who specialized in science stories (Karl Bates and Robin Smith, later joined by a third writer). I wrote some, too. We also had campus colleagues who covered research on medicine, the environment, engineering, and more.

By contrast, at the flagship university in the country where I served as a Peace Corps volunteer until this past summer, there were no research communicators. There wasn't even a news office. In fact, there weren't any science writers in the entire country, as best I could tell.

My wife, Champa, and I were posted to Moldova, a small country about the size of Maryland tucked between Romania and Ukraine, near the Black Sea. Little known by Americans despite its beauty and delicious wine, it's the poorest country in Europe. I worked at the public library in a small city near the capital. The librarians there earn less than \$300 a month, as do the teachers at the school where Champa taught English. Conditions are challenging. Corruption is common. Many people despair about the country's future and about their own. Large numbers have left to find higher-paying jobs abroad.

Yet we came to love Moldova and considered it a privilege to serve there. I'd spent much of my career as a science writer, at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the National Academy of Sciences before moving to Duke. As I approached my 60s, I was restless to shed my business suit, stretch myself in new ways and "give back." I knew the Peace Corps well, having served in my 20s in Nepal. I taught English there and fell in love with, and eventually married, one of the other teachers at my school. Nearly four decades later, Champa and I decided to walk away from our conventional American lives and serve together somewhere else.

Once again, the decision changed my life. It broadened my perspective about the world, about America, and about myself. It also enabled me to help others while having an unforgettable adventure.

More than 230,000 Americans have served as volunteers in 141 countries since President Kennedy established the Peace Corps in 1961. Roughly 7,400 trainees and volunteers currently teach English, assist women's groups, promote small businesses, and do other jobs in 65 countries, typically for two years. Most are single and in their 20s but Peace Corps volunteers represent the diversity of America.

Peace Corps provides excellent language and technical training for its volunteers

and covers all of their expenses. Many NASW members would be especially strong candidates for jobs such as teaching science or health, working with farmers, or combating HIV-AIDS.

I didn't call on my science-writing background much in Moldova, but I did get to share my communications experience while helping my library colleagues to modernize their website and use tools such as social media, videos, infographics, and QR codes. Even more important, we strategized often about how to reach out to the community, a concept still taking hold in this former Soviet state. We also worked together to write grant proposals and carry out projects.

It's taken me a while to get used to America since returning home this summer, and not only because of the political changes in Washington. I've learned anew how lucky I am to be able to take so many things for granted here—science writing among them.



Carol L. Rogers volunteering during the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign.

CAROL L. ROGERS

Professor of the Practice Emerita, University of Maryland Philip Merrill College of Journalism.

I begin with a confession: I have pretty much failed at being retired. During these past four years, I have spent few moments indulging my retirement fantasy of sitting on the beach drinking margaritas. Rather, most of my days have been as full and challenging as they were throughout my career.

As they say, timing is everything. After I had given myself a little break, the election season was getting underway in earnest and I signed up as an active volunteer with the Hillary for America presidential campaign. I didn't just wade in; I jumped in with both feet. Over the course of 2016, I traveled to five states to canvass and help with get-out-the-vote efforts in primaries and caucuses, and then to three states during the general election. I knocked on doors and worked phone banks, circulated petitions, did candidate visibility in city parks, lined up volunteers, co-organized DC Women for Hillary, helped to staff the campaign office in my home town in Virginia, maintained a dedicated Facebook page, and otherwise worked with the campaign as part of the Women's Outreach Leadership team. I can get exhausted, and exhilarated, just thinking about it all.

From the snow-covered roads in rural Iowa to the streets in Manhattan to the suburbs in Raleigh, I talked with voters about issues affecting their lives. I met hundreds of so-called "ordinary people," many of whom invited me—a stranger—into their homes (a no-no in canvassing, though a rule I occasionally violated). I also met a number of well-known figures (among them Senator Cory Booker and Olympic medalist Michelle Kwan), scores of staffers and volunteers, and, of course, the candidate herself. The campaign was filled with a dedicated, diverse, and enthusiastic group of people with shared ideals and values. I remain in touch with many of them today.

I learned a lot about how the sausage gets made in our messy world of politics and saw first-hand how difficult it can be for citizens to get involved and even to vote. I got to see history made in Philadelphia as I watched the first woman ever become the presidential nominee of a major political party. As the words of that iconic song from *Hamilton* says: "I wanna be in the room where it happens" and in 2016 I was there. I'd also like to think I played some role—albeit a very small one—in that history-making event.

I had planned to return to some semblance of a laid-back retired life after the 2016 election but, alas, there was no going back. I've stayed involved in political campaigns throughout 2017 and 2018 with canvassing and phone banking, texting, and postcard writing for candidates not only in my home state of Virginia but also across the country.

Upon reflection, it is clear I need to revise my opening paragraph. I have not failed at *being* retired but at the *fantasy* of retirement. For me, the reality of retirement is even better than the fantasy, though decidedly different. It is providing the time for me to immerse myself in political activism at a level I was simply unable to do during most of my career. It is enriching my life in ways too numerous to mention and most of the time it also is great fun. And, just maybe, it is making a little difference.

Breaking News: As I was in the process of writing this short article, I was re-elected an at-large member of the Ward 3 Democratic Committee in D.C. So, it looks like I won't be retiring from political activities anytime soon.



Ed Ricciuti, age 80, is president of a nonprofit martial arts studio.

ED RICCIUTI

Freelance science writer and, at age 80, a martial arts instructor.

I have had a lifetime interest in combat sports and self-defense, having studied a number of ancient arts over the years. I am trained in the Chinese internal martial arts of Black Dragon Kung Fu and Tai Chi Quan. I earned my first-degree black belt in combat hapkido in 2009, at age 70, and now hold a fourth degree and a certificate as a senior instructor.

I am president of Green Hill Martial Arts, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in Killingworth,

Conn. We do not teach forms or katas, or acrobatic kicks or throws. Nor do we break boards and compete in tournaments or competitions.

What I do teach is combat hapkido, a no-nonsense art that stresses street-wise self-defense. My students are kids, teens, and adults. Kids benefit from martial arts skills that teaches them not only how to defend themselves against bullies and predatory adults, but also how to work in harmony with other kids. As a nonprofit, the staff and I can spend more time helping kids than many commercial schools. Among our students are kids with autism and other challenges. I have also taught seminars for women, especially those just going off to college.

Recently, I launched a self-defense program for seniors and am uniquely qualified to do so. Most instructors who offer such courses are young and strong, with no idea of a senior's physical liabilities. You do not have to be in your physical prime in order to train but for many seniors, weakness is all in their heads. I admit to getting kind of preachy when it comes to telling seniors to get off their butts. Those who do find they grow more fit and enjoy increased balance, ease of motion, and self-confidence when studying martial arts.

As an instructor, I get routinely punched, thrown, twisted, banged around, and must train fiercely. For example, last year I did 976 jumping jacks interspersed with pushups in an hour as part of a Kung Fu endurance class. I do not expect all seniors to do this, but I do try to make people

continued on page 10

[Giving back] broadened my perspective about the world, about America, and about myself.

—David Jarmul

Such an
opportunity
comes rarely,
perhaps once.
When it does...
it is time to act!

—Richard Robinson

aware that they can do much more physically than they think they can.

At age 80, working with kids and seniors brightens my life. Next up, if I can convince my agent, is a book on martial arts and self-defense for seniors.



Richard Robinson (standing) jumped in with both feet to honor the teaching career of Ricki Lombard.

RICHARD ROBINSON

Producer of an off-off-off-off-off Broadway musical theatrical review in honor of a beloved teacher.

In the fall of 2003, after an extended hiatus in Tucson, our family returned to Sherborn, Mass.—the town I grew up in—in time for our oldest to begin 9th grade. To my surprise and delight, my favorite teacher, Mrs. Ricki Lombard, was still on staff teaching English. When I was her student, she had just begun directing plays and in the intervening years had built a musical-theatrical empire. The shows she directed were legendary in the community, as were the intricate sets designed by her

husband, Gino.

When I learned that Ricki would be retiring, I volunteered, under the auspices of the parent arts group, to be producer of a show featuring her many students reprising their roles from over three decades of performances. The idea wasn't mine, but I was the right guy in the right place at the right time: an alum, back in town, with a very flexible schedule, who likes big projects. It didn't hurt that I could immediately envision myself in the opening scene (from Ionesco's "The Chairs"). It was time to act, in both senses of the word.

As I contacted alums, I met a cluster of former students whose love for Ricki and Gino, and whose enthusiasm for the idea of this show, made it clear that I had stumbled into an opportunity, and a responsibility, much larger than I had imagined. "I would do anything for her," "No matter where I am in the world, I will make it a point to be back for this," and "I owe Ricki most of everything I have accomplished since those days," were typical responses.

I spent the next 16 months reading scripts and listening to cast recordings, choosing scenes and songs that I liked as art, that I could imagine a way to stage, that featured someone who might be available, and that said something meaningful for this show. "The Ricki Revue: Thirty-Seven Years, One Night" started with "Magic to Do" from *Pippin* and ended with "You're the Top" from *Anything Goes*. In the middle was "The Crew Song" from *West Side Story*: "When you're in crew, you're in crew all the way..."

During show week, many people expressed what I felt: This was the very best kind of reunion, reuniting with people who mattered to you, drawing on the shared bonds of the past to do a great thing in the present. Our centerpiece, "The Great Lombardohood of Man," from *How to Succeed in Business*, celebrated that sense of kinship (complete with choreography and a secret handshake invented during dress rehearsal). The show itself was glorious with 70 people on stage and 500 in the audience. By the end of the evening, my smile muscles hurt.

It was my privilege, and my great joy, to have had the chance to create and to collaborate, to say thanks, and to help give voice to that same gratitude in so many others. Such an opportunity comes rarely, perhaps once. When it does...it is time to act!



Rick Borchelt, DOE director of the office for communications and public affairs, finding ways to share his avocation as a naturalist.

RICK BORCHELT

Member of National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) ad hoc committee to review the role of NSF-supported biological collections in research and education and develop recommendations for their future maintenance to enable their continued use to benefit science and society.

Some kids win blue ribbons at the state fair for pigs or sheep or cows they raise; some win ribbons for the biggest pumpkin or best ears of corn; and some win prizes for butterfly collections, as I did in middle school.

But my meticulously arranged pinned specimens in two glass-topped walnut cases initially threw the judges for a loop figuring out an entry category. Despite ending up in Arts & Crafts with lace doilies, patchwork quilts, and tole-painted mailboxes, my entry took the blue ribbon.

That was the first of many natural history collections that occupied my youth and college years: gems and minerals, pressed wildflowers, and a small trunk full of native mouse, rat, vole, and shrew skins. All of these are history now, donated to local schools or nature centers when I went away to graduate school to study systematic entomology: the identification and taxonomy of insects, and in my case, moths. A few of my collections made their way into proper scientific museum collections, yet, I sometimes wonder what became of all those specimens, whether they were properly cared for or consigned to a dumpster when natural history no longer matched up with state education STEM standards.

WRITERS GIVING BACK continued on page 33

Patrusky Lecture by Shirley Tilghman

Shirley M. Tilghman, a mammalian developmental geneticist who served as the 19th president of Princeton University, presented the sixth Patrusky Lecture during CASW's New Horizons in Science program at ScienceWriters2018.

Tilghman chose *Righting the Ship: Systemic Flaws in the Biomedical Research Enterprise* as the theme of her address to science writers. Her talk celebrated the promise of remarkable new methods in biomedical science while pointing to structural problems that may prevent society from reaping their benefits. She gave her view of the roots of this dilemma and offered some solutions.

Along with leading scientists Bruce Alberts, Judith Kimble, and Harold Varmus, Tilghman is currently engaged in a project called *Rescuing Biomedical Research* (rescuingbiomedicalresearch.org), which advocates reforming the U.S. research system in order to encourage creative and innovative research and boost basic science.

In a 2014 essay and 2015 opinion piece and in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the U.S.*, Alberts, Tilghman, Varmus, and Marc Kirschner of Harvard University decried logistical, administrative, and conceptual logjams resulting from the hypercompetitive environment of U.S. biomedical science, the burden of grant writing and administration, the distorting effects of the publishing and government funding systems, and the nearly two decades of training now required to become an independent investigator.



CASW President Alan Boyle congratulates Patrusky Lecturer Shirley M. Tilghman with a certificate and crystal sculpture.

ABOUT SHIRLEY M. TILGHMAN

It was not Tilghman's first appearance on CASW's New Horizons in Science stage. During her earlier research career, she studied the way in which genes are organized in the genome and regulated during early development and was a member of the team that cloned the first mammalian gene. She was one of the founding members of the National Advisory Council for Human Genome Research.

A member of the Princeton faculty since 1986, she was named president of the university in 2001. She returned to teaching in 2013.

As the sixth Patrusky Lecturer, Tilghman was presented a certificate and

crystal sculpture, one of many honors bestowed upon her. She is an Officer of the Order of Canada and the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society for Developmental Biology, the Genetics Society of America Medal, and the L'Oreal-UNESCO Award for Women in Science. She is a member of the American Philosophical Society, the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Medicine and The Royal Society of London. She serves as a trustee of Amherst College, the Institute for Advanced Study, the Simons Foundation, and the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology. She also serves on the Science Advisory Board of the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, is a director of The Broad Institute and is a Fellow of the Corporation of Harvard College.

ABOUT THE PATRUSKY LECTURES AND BEN PATRUSKY

Tilghman joins a list of distinguished scientists invited to give an authoritative and expansive address at the annual New Horizons in Science briefings, part of NASW-CASW



ScienceWriters meeting. Previous lectures were given by George M. Whitesides of Harvard University (2013), Donald Johanson of Arizona State University and the Institute of Human Origins (2014), Jo Handelsman of Yale University and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (2015), Steven Weinberg of the University of Texas at Austin (2016), and Susan Desmond-Hellman of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2017). All previous lectures are available on video at casw.org/new-horizons/patrusky-lectures.

Ben Patrusky embarked on his science-writing career in the early 1960s after earning a Ph.D. in biology. *PATRUSKY LECTURE continued on page 33*

UPCOMING MEETINGS

May 23-25, 2019 • Science Writers and Communicators of Canada, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. sciencewriters.ca

July 1-5, 2019 • 11th World Conference of Science Journalists, Lausanne, Switzerland. wcsj2019.eu

Oct. 25-29, 2019 • ScienceWriters2019, Penn State University. sciencewriters2019.org

May 26-28, 2020 • 16th PCST (Public Communication of Science and Technology) Conference, Aberdeen, Scotland. pcst2020.org

July 4-10, 2020 • 9th ESOF (Euroscience Open Forum), Trieste, Italy. euroscience.org

Master's Degree Approved for Science Communication Program

The UC Santa Cruz Science Communication Program has begun awarding students a M.S. degree in science communication rather than a graduate certificate. The switch from certificate to master's degree does not involve any changes to the curriculum and was approved by UC President Janet Napolitano.

The switch from certificate to master's degree does not involve any changes to the curriculum.

"The review committees unanimously recognized that the program is deeply rigorous and the preparation and training are substantive enough to warrant a master's degree," said program director Erika Check Hayden. "This decision is a testament to the work that [previous directors] John Wilkes and Rob Irion have done in building this program, and a lot of credit also goes to the instructors, students, and alumni whose work has earned our international reputation as a leading science journalism program."

Although the lack of a master's degree hasn't limited the careers of the program's previous graduates, Hayden said the question always comes up in conversations with prospective students.

"In journalism, the type of degree you have doesn't matter much. But there are lots of different kinds of careers in science communication now, and for some of those a master's degree might be helpful," she said. "This change will boost our ability to recruit top candidates." ■

(source: news release)

Victor K. McElheny Award Established

The Knight Science Journalism program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology celebrated its 35th anniversary by launching the Victor K. McElheny award.

The award will honor outstanding coverage of science, public health, technology, or environmental issues at the local or regional level in the United States. The award was endowed by a gift from Victor K. McElheny, the Knight program's founder, and his wife, Ruth McElheny, along with a grant from the Rita Allen Foundation of Princeton, N.J.

While some science journalism contests have small-market categories, the McElheny Award will be the only one aimed exclusively at local and regional outlets and it will celebrate such work with a single award of \$5,000 and a ceremony hosted by KSJ. To encourage wide participation, local or regional are defined broadly; only outlets with a large staff and emphasis on a national audience will be excluded. Entries will be accepted on local or state-level topics from newspapers, small magazines and digital sites, broadcasters, podcasters, and bloggers. The judges will be encouraged to honor investigative, community-service, and compelling narrative journalism.

Winner(s) of the inaugural award will be announced in March with presentation of the honor at a reception and public event at the Cambridge Science Festival, in April. For more information: ksj.mit.edu/mcelheny-award-faqs ■

(source: news release)



Victor K. McElheny

Bruce V. Bigelow Memorial Science Communication Fellowship

The Bruce V. Bigelow Memorial Science Communications Fellowship is a new full-time, paid, nine-month interdisciplinary science communications fellowship shared between the communications teams at UC San Diego Health, Jacobs School of Engineering, and Scripps Institution of Oceanography. Applications will be accepted between Jan. 7 and March 31, 2019.

The fellowship is named in memory of Bruce V. Bigelow, an award-winning science and technology journalist. Bigelow was part of the *San Diego Union-Tribune* team that won the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for national reporting and served as San Diego editor for Xconomy, a national life science and innovation news site. He died in June 2018 after a brief illness contracted while hiking in Utah.

In the spirit of Bigelow's interests and legacy, the fellowship offers early career science writers and communicators with rich and diverse experience covering the fields of health sciences, oceanography, and engineering, particularly where they intersect. Fellows will have opportunities to write for UC San Diego websites, press releases, blogs, magazines and newsletters, produce multimedia pieces (e.g., video, podcast) and contribute to UC San Diego's social media presence at the direction of fellowship mentors.

Information and application requirements: health.ucsd.edu/Bigelow-Fellowship ■

(source: news release)



Bruce V. Bigelow

New Tax Rules: Some Help, Some Hurt

BY JULIAN BLOCK

In these tumultuous tax times, my clients bombard me with questions. Many of their queries concern Public Law No. 115-97, aka the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), signed by President Donald J. Trump on Dec. 23, 2017, just before Santa arrived.

Both supporters and opponents of the TCJA consider it to be the most comprehensive overhaul of the Internal Revenue Code since President Ronald Reagan signed the historic Tax Reform Act of 1986.

While clients beamed because the centerpiece of the president's tax package was lower rates for individuals and corporations, I cautioned them that it would be premature to uncork the bubbly.

I explained that the wide-ranging legislation did lots more than lower their rates. It also curtailed or eliminated many of their long-cherished write-offs, starting with 1040s for 2018 to be filed in 2019.

So then, clients ask, does the president's mix of rates lowered and deductions discarded or diminished mean he'll cause their tax tabs to increase or decrease? That kind of question, I respond, doesn't lend itself to a precise answer. How things turn out depends on the kinds of income they receive and the deductions they claim.

What follows are highlights of some changes that particularly target many millions of unsuspecting Americans, NASW members among them, who previously gained more by using Form 1040's Schedule A to "itemize" their deductions than by using the standard deduction amounts that are available only for those who don't itemize.

Itemizers had become accustomed to submitting 1040s on which they claimed sizable write-offs for payments like interest on their home mortgages, state and local income taxes and property taxes, and charitable donations.

PAYMENTS FOR MEDICAL CARE

The IRS already made it difficult for itemizers to deduct such payments. The big barrier: Generally, they're allowable only to the extent that they exceed 7.5 percent of a person's adjusted gross income.

However, a frequently overlooked exception will continue to be available for 2018 and later years for NASW members and other freelancers who make payments for health insurance. Their payments aren't subject to the 7.5 percent threshold. Another plus:

They get to claim such payments, regardless of whether they itemize or use the standard deduction.

More information on this topic found in "Writers' Write-Offs for Medical Insurance" (SW, spring 2016).

FEES FOR TAX RETURN PREP, TAX PLANNING, AND FIGHTING IRS AUDITS

The IRS similarly made it hard for itemizers to deduct such fees. Generally, they're deductible only to the extent that they exceed 2 percent of adjusted gross income.

However, the TCJA left unchanged a long-standing exception that allows fee splitting for that portion of tax preparation and planning fees that are reasonably allocable to: Schedule C (profit or loss from business); Schedule E (income from renting vacation homes or other properties, royalties, partnerships, and S corporations); or Schedule F (profit or loss from farming).

NASW members, along with other taxpayers, can continue to use such fees on Schedules C, E, or F to offset business, rental or farming income. Ditto, says the IRS, when they pay fees to fight audits of Schedule C, E, or F activities. More information on this topic found in "Deduction Restriction Hurts Taxpayers on Tax Prep/Planning" (SW, spring 2018).

Note that the TCJA sharply increased the standard deduction amounts available to individuals who opt not to itemize. Given that change, what should I say when it's no longer worthwhile for them to itemize?

I cite a maneuver that allows them to lose less to the IRS: Stop itemizing. Start using the standard deduction, a tactic that requires them to

accept the loss of tax benefits when paying for things like interest, state and local taxes, contributions, medical care and tax advice.

What should I say when it remains worthwhile for them to itemize? They need to curb their enthusiasm. The actual tax benefit of their itemized deductibles might prove to be modest, barely exceeding their standard deduction, something that's especially true for married persons when both spouses are older than 65.

To balance the books, former itemizers who switch to the standard deduction aren't locked into using it in future years, as each year stands on its own. It's okay the following year to resume itemizing and deduct payments for charitable contributions and the like. ■

*While clients
beamed because
the centerpiece
of the president's
tax package
was lower rates...*

*...it would be
premature to uncork
the bubbly.*

JULIAN BLOCK IS AN ATTORNEY AND AUTHOR BASED IN LARCHMONT, N.Y. HE HAS BEEN CITED AS: "A LEADING TAX PROFESSIONAL" (NEW YORK TIMES); "AN ACCOMPLISHED WRITER ON TAXES" (WALL STREET JOURNAL); AND "AN AUTHORITY ON TAX PLANNING" (FINANCIAL PLANNING MAGAZINE). INFORMATION ABOUT HIS BOOKS IS AT JULIANBLOCKTAXEXPERT.COM.

Advance Copy

Backstories on books by NASW members

BY LYNNE LAMBERG



For this column, NASW authors are asked to tell how they came up with their book idea, developed a proposal, found an agent and publisher, funded and conducted research, and put the book together. They are also asked what they wish they had known before they began working on their book, what they might do differently the next time, and for tips for aspiring authors. Submitted copy is edited for space.

***All Over the Map: A Cartographic Odyssey*, by Betsy Mason and Greg Miller, National Geographic**

Our book *All Over the Map* grew out of the map blog we have been writing together, first at *Wired* and now at *National Geographic*, since 2013. It's a beautifully illustrated book of stories about maps and mapmakers that touches on many aspects of science, history, art, technology, and culture.

As we've explored the world through maps over the years, we've found far more stories that intrigued us than we could possibly have time to write for the blog. When a National Geographic Books editor contacted us about doing a map book, it seemed like a great opportunity to write some of those stories.

We worked with the editor to develop a concept for the book. When it came to negotiating the contract, neither of us had past book-writing experience to help us evaluate it. We consulted author friends and researched typical contracts for large-format books like ours. We debated bringing on an agent but ultimately decided to go it alone. In the end we felt we had a fair deal, but of course we'll never know if we could have done better with an agent (after factoring in the fee).

All Over the Map contains 80 stories that range from around 350 to 1,500 words. A few were based on stories we had already done for the blog, but the vast majority were new. We had a sense of how much research, writing, and editing work would be involved, but we hadn't anticipated how much additional work we'd end up doing on other aspects of the book.

We were responsible for tracking down and negotiating permissions for images of the more than 200 maps in the book and working closely with the designers on page layouts. We suspect this would be the case for any illustrated book with a substantial amount of text that is closely tied to the images. Authors considering whether to take on a similar project would be wise to

keep this in mind when negotiating the terms of the contract.

—Betsy Mason and Greg Miller

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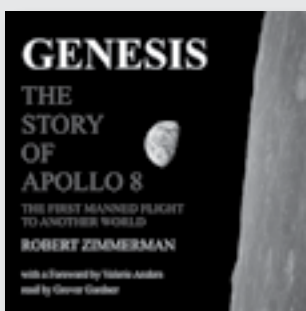
***Genesis: The Story of Apollo 8, The First Manned Flight to Another World*, by Robert Zimmerman, self-published audio and e-book**

The genesis of *Genesis: The Story of Apollo 8* matches the beginning of my freelance science journalism career. Back in 1997, after three years of freelance science writing, I decided that to make a decent living I needed to not only sell magazine articles but books as well.

Having grown up during the 1960s, I remembered the Apollo 8 mission as having been the one Apollo mission that had had the most impact on American culture, far more than the Apollo 11 landing. The mission had been the very first time humans had left Earth's orbit and traveled to another world. They had done it Christmas week 1968 and had read the first 12 verses of the Bible to the world's largest audience on Christmas Eve. They took the first Earthrise picture, one of the most famous single images ever snapped by a human. Their words describing the moon and Earth from space helped shape American opinions about the environment and space exploration for decades.

I decided this story needed its own book.

Getting the book published in 1998, without an agent, was not difficult. In 2016, I was approached by one of my readers and fellow writer Bill Hartel. With the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 8 mission approaching, in December 2018, Bill wanted to provide the financing to get the audiobook produced. I contacted Grover Gardner, one of the world's foremost audiobook narrators, and was astonished when he instantly



agreed to narrate the audiobook, at a reasonable fee. I used ebookit to publish both audio and e-book versions.

My biggest problem in this whole process was dealing with my original publisher/editor in 1997, who did not like my perspective on the mission, and tried to get me to rewrite the book to advocate his own political perspective. I refused, he backed down, and *Genesis* thus clearly reflects the ideas of its writer.

My main advice to all writers, therefore, is to always follow your own soul, and do not let others push you around. In the end, being true to yourself will pay off in every way you can possibly imagine.

—Robert Zimmerman

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■ ■ ■

***The Computer Book: From the Abacus to Artificial Intelligence, 250 Milestones in the History of Computer Science*, by Simson L. Garfinkel (NASW member) and Rachel H. Grunspan, Sterling Milestones**

In June 2016, my agent, Matt Wagner, told me he had been approached by an editor at Sterling, an imprint owned by Barnes & Noble, seeking someone to write *The Computer Book* for the company's Milestones series.

Sterling Milestones are coffee table books that take a science theme, like physics or engineering, and place 250 significant events in chronological order, each with a 350-word essay and a full-page photo.

I've written about the history of computing before and, in fact, am always being told by editors that I put too much history into my articles. Now I had a chance to write nothing but!

Sterling asked for two researched and developed essays, a sample table of contents including 50 of the 250 milestones I was proposing, an author bio, market analysis, and a few pages on what I would emphasize in the chronology. Since I had a full-time job, the publisher wanted me to have a co-author—just in case.

I reached out to my friend Rachel Grunspan, who knows a lot about how computers are used in games and entertainment, as well as the social impacts of technology. Both of us are employees of the U.S. Government and authored the book in our personal capacities.

The biggest challenge we faced was limiting each milestone to 350 words. We had to leave a lot on the cutting-room floor. Rachel and I read original research reports, contemporaneous news accounts, and first-person interviews to find what we thought were the most salient facts

to distill. The challenge is particularly evident in the milestone for the word "cyberspace," for example. Limiting the history to 250 milestones also was tough.

To make the November 2018 publication deadline, we had to deliver the text by November 2017. We sent it to Sterling in batches of 50 to 100 milestones each. Sterling did an amazing job of editing; among the best I've ever had. Sterling also hired a photo researcher who found five to 10 images for each milestone from which Rachel and I made our selections. There's an illustration for every milestone.

—Simson L. Garfinkel

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■ ■ ■

***Pandas to Penguins: Ethical Encounters with Animals at Risk*, by Melissa Gaskill, Texas A&M University Press**

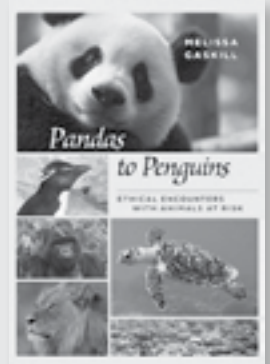
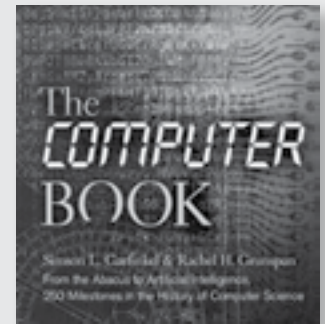
We've all seen tourists behaving badly with wildlife: the beachgoers passing around a baby dolphin to take selfies, park visitors chasing wildlife to get photos, people visiting tourist's sites in foreign countries where you can pet a baby tiger. None of these experiences end well for the animal.

I have a long-standing interest in the intersection of travel and conservation, particularly places where the former supports the latter. I previously wrote a book about how the sea turtle science and conservation community uses tourism to support projects around the world (*A Worldwide Travel Guide to Sea Turtles*, TAMU Press, 2014).

Pandas to Penguins expands on that theme, inspired by my own trips in South Africa, Australia, and around North America and the Caribbean, to places where people can see iconic animals in the wild and help protect them and their habitats at the same time.

I approached my editor at TAMU Press about the idea and then worked to select specific animals to include. That part got tricky, as I wanted places where people had a reasonable chance to see the animal in the wild and where they could do so with responsible outfitters who followed ethical practices—no handling animals or keeping them in captivity—and supported the local economy, too. I also wanted opportunities spread out around the globe.

I include information about each species and the threats to its survival, as well as first-person accounts of the trips to see them. In the past 10 years or so, I have seen wolves in Yellowstone





National Park, thousands of sandhill cranes on the Platte River in Nebraska, wild lions in South Africa, and coral species that make up the Great Barrier Reef off the coast of Australia, to name a few. I wish I could say I have seen all the animals described in the book in their natural settings. When I was not able to do that, I spoke with outfitters and organizers about their experiences.

—Melissa Gaskill

CONTACT AUTHOR: Melissa Gaskill, 512-468-0774, gaskillml@gmail.com **BLOG:** melissagaskill.blogspot.com **BOOK:** bit.ly/2E59SE8 **PUBLICIST:** Christine Brown, 979-458-3982, christinebrown@tamu.edu

■ ■ ■

***Mythicals*, by Dennis Meredith, Glyphus LLC**

Sometimes a writer gets a totally off-the-wall weird plot idea that he just can't get out of his head until he writes the novel. That's how my new sci-fi/fairy tale *Mythicals* was born. As I recall, I was daydreaming...uh, I mean creatively conceptualizing...about the fabulous menagerie of creatures of legend, and wondering how I could write a novel about them. My science-fiction filter kicked in, and I realized I could gin up a plot where they really existed as aliens on the planet. From there, it was a natural (to me) leap to having them be exiles and living among the natives via high-tech disguises I called flesh-suits.

Of course, I wouldn't be satisfied with garden-variety fairies, ogres, elves, pixies, trolls, werewolves, angels, and such. So, I reinvented the creatures to give them compelling back stories, vividly depicted home planets, and exotic customs that I hope readers will find surprising, funny, and/or satiric.

For conflict, I came up with the idea that these *Mythicals* realize the planet of their exile is ecologically doomed unless they take drastic action—a step they dub the Remediation—to reduce the population. Their weapon: orbiting electromagnetic pulse weapons that will blast the planet with intense radio waves and devastate the technological infrastructure. Some *Mythicals* advocate for the Remediation; others believe the planet's species can be saved.

I was deep into writing when a huge plot twist occurred to me, which of course I won't reveal here. Suffice it to say, I guarantee the reader a profound shock to the literary system, I believe in a stimulating and deeply thought-provoking way. And as a bonus, here's a "true" tale surrounding the novel: bit.ly/2R6S4wh.

—Dennis Meredith

CONTACT AUTHOR: 760-451-6845, dennis@glyphus.com, dennismeredith.com **BOOK:** bit.ly/2QJdGyP **PUBLICIST:** Joanne Meredith, 760-451-6845, editor@glyphus.com

■ ■ ■

***Public Speaking Super Powers: Unleash Your Inner Speaking Superhero and Communicate Your Message with Confidence*, by Carma Spence, Author Academy Elite**

I wrote *Public Speaking Super Powers* to help readers learn the foundational skills they need to communicate effectively before groups. The book started as a blog post in 2010. Because of that post's popularity, I decided to expand it into a book. Research on competing books revealed that few covered all skills required to be an effective speaker.

It wasn't until 2017, however, that things came together. I learned through an NASW list-serv of an AI-based transcription service. I discovered a hybrid publisher who provides book coaching and its imprint without taking royalties. Because I wanted to enter the book in a competition, I had a hard deadline.

Most of my books have been self-published. I like having control over my work and higher royalties. My one experience working with a publisher was costly. That book is out of print. Although I have the rights to its content, I can't use the title. Going with a hybrid publisher gives me the flexibility of self-publishing with the clout of a publisher.

To write this book, I interviewed more than 85 speakers. Then I reviewed literature to fill out topics not covered well in the interviews. I organized my notes into chapter-focused documents, printed them out, and cut them into individual quotes. Once I organized the slips of paper, I wrote the first draft of the book. Finally, I massaged the text and then worked with two editors to polish the manuscript.

Had I known how long it would take to piece everything together, I would have started sooner. I wish I had launched the e-book first. I then could have released the physical editions with "best seller" noted on the cover. I also would have hired marketing help at least three months sooner.

Despite the obstacles I faced in getting this book out, it became a Kindle bestseller and a 2018 Author Academy Awards Top 10 Finalist.

My advice: Plan your marketing before you finish your book, even if you have a traditional publisher. Build your platform and recruit the support you need to make your book a success. Then finish your book!

—Carma Spence

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■ ■ ■

***The Unofficial Guide to Minecraft Survival (and) The Unofficial Guide to Minecraft Mods*, by Linda Zajac, Lerner**

I received contracts to write these books after I happened to notice an open call for technology writers on the publisher's website. With 15 or so years of computer programming and design work under my belt, I thought I was qualified to do the work. Before emailing, I reviewed the coding books for kids that they had published. I was impressed by their simplicity, so I sent clips expressing an interest.

Once the editor got back to me, he told me the subject of the books and that they'd be part of a four-book series. Before committing, I did more research. I discovered that teachers in other countries had developed lesson plans around *Minecraft*. The exceptionally popular computer game was being used as a tool to teach concepts in biology, ecology, physics, chemistry, and geology.

I also learned that gamers had coded thousands of "mods." By playing *Minecraft* with mods, they could modify nearly every aspect of the game. These mods were essentially enhancing a Java program (*Minecraft*). Players have coded mods that allow them to do wild and wacky things while they play, like rocket into space, drive a motorcycle, eat sushi, explore cities, and see rainbow cats that fart.

Once I agreed to take on the project, I had four months to learn the game and write two books with STEM and coding sidebars. The research was not like anything I've done before. In addition to reading books and canvassing websites, I played *Minecraft* a lot. With my daughter's help, I took most of the screenshots for the books.

I wish I had asked more questions when I got the specifications. I went into too much detail and had to revise. As far as advice goes, open your eyes to new clients, new kinds of writing, and new possibilities. Don't be afraid to take risks. I never thought my computer programming background was much help to me as a science writer, and here it is opening the door to the book publishing world.

—Linda Zajac

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■ ■ ■

***The Handy Forensic Science Answer Book*, by Patricia Barnes-Svarney (NASW member) and Thomas E. Svarney, Visible Ink Press**

The Handy Forensic Science Answer Book is Thomas' and my ninth book in the *Handy Answer* series for Visible Ink Press. We wrote it for both the general public and students who may be interested in a career in some facet of forensics.

Because both Thomas and I have a background in science, most of our books for the series deal with various science disciplines. This book is no exception. In this case, we were able to include a plethora of sciences that are represented in forensics, such as chemistry (blood samples, etc.), physics (accident investigations, etc.), anatomy (autopsies), and even some more "indirect" sciences, such as geology and meteorology. There's also a section on how forensic science has been treated in the media, from CSI-type television programs and movies to nonfiction and fiction.

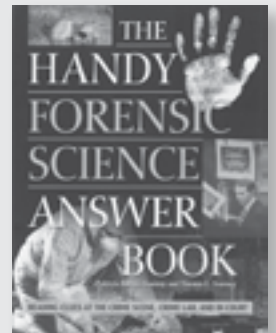
Most of the books we've written for the *Handy Answer* series have been suggested by us or the publisher who comes up with great topics; we then send in a detailed outline-proposal. We have had the same editor, Kevin Hile, for most of the books. Kevin has a great knowledge of the sciences, which makes all parts of the process, from detailed outline to galleys, that much smoother. Our agent, Agnes Birnbaum, has been invaluable in the numerous negotiations with Visible Ink Press. We do most of our publicity through our website and/or articles. Our publicist sends out information about our books for reviews by various magazines and journals.

We obtained our information by reviewing literature in the field, conducting interviews, and talking with experts in the various forensic disciplines. We also obtained scientific abstracts and papers through organization and government websites. If we had questions, we contacted the authors, most often by email.

We're often asked how we collaborate to write our books. After over a dozen books together, we've learned that Thomas is an exceptional researcher, while I'm good at organizing and writing. Both of us do the editing. That usually means reading the book many times over once it's "done."

—Patricia Barnes-Svarney

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Your purchase of NASW members' books via nasw.org/bookstore helps support NASW programs and services.

Advance Copy welcomes new book announcements. Find submission guidelines and image requirements at nasw.org/advance-copy-submission-guidelines.



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Siri Carpenter
The Open Notebook
 SIRI.CARPENTER@GMAIL.COM

President's Letter

WHY WOULD ANYONE BECOME A WRITER?

I CAN'T COUNT HOW MANY TIMES I'VE MUTTERED THIS QUESTION WHILE STARING AT A BLANK SCREEN, DEVISING EXCUSES TO DO ANYTHING BUT WRITE. Who among us has not removed and thoroughly cleaned all the keys from their keyboard while on deadline?

Truthfully, I don't have to look far to be reminded of what inspired me to be a writer, and still does: the members of NASW and the creativity and impact of their stories. Whether our purpose is to explain, investigate, advocate, or entertain—or any combination of these—this dedication to telling science stories is a force for good, especially at a time that brings many and increasing challenges for journalism.

The NASW community has been part of my professional DNA since I attended my first annual meeting in 1998 while still a graduate student. Although I hadn't yet written a word for publication, that meeting cemented my knowledge that I was a science writer. I had found my people. Later, I followed Laura Helmuth into an internship at *Science News*. So, it seems somehow fitting, if also daunting, to now follow her into the presidency of NASW. Serving with Laura on the NASW board heightened my admiration for her as I watched her bring ambitious plans to fruition, the most exciting and momentous of which was NASW's co-hosting WCSJ2017 in San Francisco.

Laura also shepherded us through the aftermath of the 2016 amendment vote in which members voted not to change the organization's officer-eligibility rules, a proposal that was on the ballot again this fall. Discussions around this issue have underlined the passion that our community has both for our shared goals and for NASW's role in helping our members do their jobs well. The board, PIO committee, governance committee, and other dedicated volunteers are continuing to brainstorm possible governance and programming solutions to increase inclusiveness within NASW while also remaining true to its essential journalistic mission. No matter your opinion on the results of this fall's vote, I hope you will help continue to build community and strengthen science writing as a profession.

Meanwhile, this community has a lot to celebrate.

- Newly created and now-expanded Excellence in Institutional Writing Award

- Redesigned website, that went live this fall
- Expanded diversity fellowship program to support minority science writers during internships
- Diverse Voices project in partnership with *The Open Notebook*, supported by Science Sandbox
- Clarified processes for handling harassment complaints
- Deeply discounted membership to the National Writers Union; providing NASW members with access to NWU's extensive grievance services

In addition, more than 800 science writers attended the October ScienceWriters meeting in Washington, D.C. Among many stimulating sessions, the meeting included two very popular pre-conference workshops. One, designed for Latin American Regional Fellows and early-career journalists, focused on the art of pitching stories. The other, a first-ever "congress" of regional science writing groups, aimed at exchanging information about practices for organizing and managing groups. Thanks to the programs committee for working to create a conference program that proved to be very broadly appealing and included many fresh voices. The NASW board and programs committee have made it a priority to improve the inclusivity of our meeting, and in collaboration with the diversity committee, we'll be building on those efforts in 2019.

Immediately following our annual meeting, NASW's information access committee, led by Gabriel Popkin, hosted a two-day Information Access Summit, which included about 100 staff journalists, freelancers, and public information officers from various government agencies and offices. After a day of thought-provoking discussions, some attendees met for a second day to draft a consensus statement that, when finalized, will be publicly disseminated. The hope is that it will strengthen both journalists' and PIOs' efforts to ensure open access to information about science generated, funded, or used by government agencies.

There's more on the horizon. The freelance committee is studying the feasibility of joining with other writers' organizations to offer group health coverage. The conflict-of-interest working group is finalizing guidelines to help science writers navigate thorny questions about COI. Our two new editors, Sarah Nightingale and Ben Young Landis, are making plans to expand NASW's communications efforts. The membership and finance committees are collaborating in an effort to build membership and increase member benefits. The PIO committee is exploring several projects, including development of a guidelines-and-best-practices resource for PIO members. If you'd like to help with any of these or other initiatives, please get in touch with me; our indefatigable executive director, Tinsley Davis; or any committee chair to volunteer your time or ideas.

Finally, I'd like to once again thank Laura Helmuth for her wise, forward-thinking, and (preternaturally) calm leadership. She will be missed. But luckily, she hasn't gone far: She's still actively involved in multiple committees. ■



Cybrarian
Russell Clemings
CYBRARIAN@NASW.ORG

Cyberbeat

SOMEHOW, WE DID IT.

THE LONG-AWAITED REDESIGN OF THE SCIENCEWRITERS (NASW.ORG) WEBSITE WAS unveiled Oct. 6, just in time for the ScienceWriters2018 meeting in Washington, D.C.

If you haven't checked it out yet, take a look. It's livelier, with far less text and more graphic elements, plus a design that works much better on small screens (i.e., smartphones) than the old version.

We did some reorganizing during the redesign process in hopes of making the site easier to navigate, and we're not finished yet. We've already rolled out a fair number of tweaks and fixed a few formatting errors. A lot more fixes are in the pipeline.

Thanks again to our designers at Kalamuna, in Oakland, Calif., along with the NASW internet committee chaired by Kathryn Jepsen, and many others for their help in making this redesign happen. Please send your questions and suggestions to me at cybrarian@nasw.org for consideration as we continue refining the site.

NASW-FREELANCE

It's probably happened to every interviewer at least once. Recently, it happened to Belgian freelancer Alexander Hellemans when he was interviewing a scientist, using two recorders just to be safe (or so he thought).

"Both the digital recorder and the cassette recorder picked up a strong electromagnetic signal typical of the noise generated by data transmission equipment," Hellemans wrote. "Are there recorders on the market that are protected against electromagnetic interference?"

Hellemans didn't get a direct answer to that question but he got plenty of sympathy, a few suggestions, and some speculation about what went wrong.

"That's an unusual problem. Did you use a long cord on the microphones? That

Dispatches

FROM THE Director



Tinsley Davis
Executive Director
DIRECTOR@NASW.ORG



For NASW members, winter is anything but a time for hibernation. The weather turns colder, the days shorter, and hot tea instead of iced coffee fuels us. As we tumble into a new year, I am in awe of all that our community accomplished in 2018 and excited for changes afoot this year.

It's even more impressive when one considers that those accomplishments are primarily volunteer conceived, led, and driven! On page 28 is our annual listing of volunteers. Thank you to all of those incredible people who make us proud. Roughly 10 percent of members volunteered in 2018, doing everything from onsite conference check-in to researching insurance options to leading the new website redesign. It's quite a feat considering how distributed we are. With members across North America and beyond, collaborating across space and time can be organizationally challenging. Proof positive are the occasions when I, as a West Coaster, have failed to account for the three-hour time difference and inadvertently committed myself to a 6 a.m. phone call.

NASW has 15 committees that wrangle the cloud's resources to devise new programs like the diversity committee's fellowship or the freelance committee's partnership with the National Writers Union. Committees not only develop ideas, they shepherd them to fruition, and keep programs thriving and evolving. Take for example, the education committee's annual student events, which have been going strong for more than a decade at AAAS meetings. Other vital committees, like finance or governance, support the ongoing operations of the organization, recommending or enacting

new policies or systems. Special project volunteers organize ScienceWriters sessions or contributing to ad hoc working groups.

There is room for more ideas, more volunteers, more committees, and for improvement in how member benefits are delivered.

In short, there is room for you. If you are interested in getting involved with an existing committee, reach out to the chair(s) to learn more and ask about open spots. If you and a group of colleagues have an idea for a new committee, reach out to Siri Carpenter to brainstorm. And finally, if you are interested in helping to write up an FAQ for the website on how to get involved, please get in touch with me. ■

Be a part of the
exciting changes
in store for NASW.

Get Involved

could have acted as an antenna to pick up radio noise from something like a generator in the basement,” wrote Auburndale, Mass., freelancer Jeff Hecht.

Raleigh, N.C., science comedian Brian Malow offered some advice.

“A test recording is a good precaution—but it’s no guarantee that the actual recording won’t have a subsequent problem—like a lavalier microphone rubbing against someone’s clothing or some other interfering noise,” Malow wrote. “The safest precaution—the one that audio pros will always strongly recommend—is to monitor the actual recording with headphones.”

Finally, Pasadena, Calif., author Rod Pyle commiserated with a story from his coverage of the Mars InSight landing just a day before Helleman’s late November post.

“I’d just completed an interview with NASA’s chief scientist—a wonderful gent named Jim Green—and my iPhone app deleted the interview (I may have hit the wrong prompt, but there was no warning—just gone and irretrievable). I went back with my tail between my legs (and with the help of fellow NASW member Sue Karlin) and re-recorded the interview, but not everyone is as agreeable about such things as Green is.”

For more, see the NASW-Freelance thread “Recording blues” at bit.ly/2PiagBy.

NASW-PIO

Twenty-first century problems: Ken Chiacchia, a senior science writer at the Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center, wrote in October that one of his center’s researchers used the wrong template when formatting a paper for submission to a journal.

How to fix that? “It’s a bit outside my bailiwick, but I wanted to help if I could,” Chiacchia wrote.

“My first question would be how different are the templates (is it just font and margins, or is it more in-depth like column widths, headers, footers, assignment of head, subhead, body formatting)?” asked Jennifer Cox, director of engineering communication at North Carolina State University.

Two other list members offered specific suggestions.

From Christina Dierkes, outreach specialist for Ohio Sea Grant: “Full disclosure that I haven’t used it much, but it looks like the ‘merge format’ option you get when right-clicking to paste in Word should do it. Might take pasting in sections so the program understands that you want to keep the template formatting instead of overwriting everything, but that would be my first try here.”

And from Bakersfield, Calif., freelancer David Latchman: “Sounds like you want to apply or ‘attach’ the new template style to the current document. Assuming it’s a recent version of Word: 1. Press Alt+T then I. This should bring you to the template dialog box. 2. Select ‘attach’ and go to the folder with the new template. 3. Be sure to select the option to ‘automatically update document styles’ below. 4. Press OK.”

For more, see the NASW-Freelance thread “Question about reformatting word file” at bit.ly/2SpM3Ld.

OTHER RECENT LIST DISCUSSIONS

NASW-Talk: Princeton, N.J., science writer Raphael Rosen issued a plea for names of books that explain topics in chemistry for lay readers. He got more than a dozen suggestions. See the November thread “Recommendations for clear chemistry writing” at bit.ly/2RrErbe.

NASW-Freelance: Should NASW members who are editors work together and urge their publishers to increase the rates they pay freelance writers? Newton, Mass., freelancer Eric Bender asks, writers and editors discuss. See the September thread “writers and editors” at bit.ly/2P8btLz.

Also, on NASW-Freelance, Fairfield, Iowa, writing consultant Karin Matchett asks what motivates scientists to seek help from people in her line of work. See the November thread “Academic manuscripts” at bit.ly/2E8hbvM. ■



**NASW Treasurer
Alexandra Witze**
Freelance Science Journalist
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Treasurer’s Report

THE NASW FINANCE COMMITTEE CONTINUES
TO OVERSEE THE ORGANIZATION’S FINANCES, WHICH REMAIN STRONG, ACCORDING TO OUR INDEPENDENT AUDITING FIRM, BFBA of Sacramento.

In 2018, we shuffled a few accounts around in order to take advantage of higher savings rates. Our operating fund remains at Bank of America; our Authors Coalition funds are split between Bank of America and Wells Fargo, in order to stay below the FDIC limit of \$250,000 per account; and our rainy-day reserve funds are held at Capital One. We are also implementing a two-signature policy for checks disbursed by NASW that are over \$5,000.

The finance committee welcomed Matt Davenport as a new member. We meet monthly via telecon to prepare a proposed budget for the organization, to review income and expenses throughout the year to make sure everything is on track, and to discuss best practices for NASW’s finances. We work closely with other committees, such as education and diversity, who have received NASW

monies as part of the annual budget process.

We have also launched a working group, with members from both the finance and membership committees, to look at membership recruitment and retention. The bulk of our non-Authors Coalition income comes from member dues, and the finance committee spent much of its in-person meeting at ScienceWriters, in October, discussing ideas for how to keep these numbers strong. ■

*...a working group,
with members from both
the finance and
membership committees,
looking at membership
recruitment and retention.*

Revenues

Dues	\$ 200,628	\$ 195,000	\$ 203,645	\$ 198,000
Workshops	72,796	0	0	90,000
Mailing List	5,000	4,000	4,700	4,000
Award Entry Fees		0	9,657	2,500
Ads/Online and Magazine	46,795	40,000	41,899	43,500
Authors Coalition (AC)	267,820	0	182,255	0
CASW Grant	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
Dividends Interest	235	150	277	200
Unrealized Gains (Loss)	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous Income	7,863	250	1,555	250
Reimbursed WCSJ Expenses	6,190	0	14,422	0
<i>A Field Guide for Science Writers</i>	916	750	1,023	875
WCSJ2017 Surplus Share		0	75,000	0
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 609,743	\$ 241,650	\$ 535,934	\$ 340,825
AC Funds Released from Restriction (less admin)	161,275	255,500	163,601	212,550 ^A
Operating Surplus Used		69,759	0	36,200 ^B
AC Admin Allowance	15,173	25,550	17,075	21,255 ^C
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 786,190	\$ 592,459	\$ 716,610	\$ 610,830

Expenses

Compensation	\$ 98,807	\$ 110,220	\$ 110,220	\$ 109,603
Payroll Taxes and Benefits	15,485	15,487	16,659	18,110
Website Support and Maintenance	38,591	37,800	38,541	42,600
Website Editor and Content	14,695	10,500	15,403	16,800 ^D
Magazine Publication	49,495	60,000	48,121	60,000 ^D
Magazine Editor and Content	25,201	27,000	25,970	27,000 ^D
Membership Data Prep	0	2,000	0	2,000
Fellowships and Grants				
AC-funded Fellowships and Grants	36,977	59,000	41,524	68,000
Internally-funded Fellowships and Grants	0	0		
Annual Workshops	109,163	0	8,862	111,550
Outreach+ Education				
AC-funded Outreach + Education	7,651	30,500	4,019	10,000
Internally-funded Outreach+Education	0	0		
Awards	23,637	0	27,488	35,500
Special Projects ^E		0		
AC-funded Special Projects	0	152,500	60,000	20,930
Internally-funded Special Projects	15,000	5,000		
Elections			4,000	4,000
WCSJ Expenses to be Reimbursed by Conf.	6,641	0	15,593	0
Supplies and Expenses	1,533	750	759	750
Internet and Telephone Service	2,926	2,000	2,930	2,250
Postage	5,147	4,000	2,976	2,500
Printing	2,827	750	0	750
Dues and Subscriptions	2,165	2,500	3,231	3,000 ^F
Insurance	3,210	3,500	5,225	3,500 ^G
Bad Debt (Recovery)	0	500	2,500	500
Bank Charges (e.g. merchant services fees)	13,262	12,000	14,054	12,500
Accounting Fees	20,956	19,000	22,053	19,000
Legal Fees	27,637	7,500	19,748	9,500
Check and Payroll Services	1,698	1,500	1,667	1,500
Board Expenses	11,398	12,500	10,762	12,500
Staff Travel	5,509	5,500	7,114	6,000 ^H
Corporate Taxes	6,741	7,000	926	6,500
Contingency	953	2,000	13	2,000
Amortization Expense	0	0	0	0
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 547,305	\$ 591,007	\$ 510,357	\$ 608,843
NET*	\$ 238,885	\$ 1,452	\$ 215,454	\$ 1,987

Authors Coalition Breakdown

Workshops	\$ 106,278	\$ 92,500	\$ 18,369	\$ 111,550
Fellowships and Grants	36,401	59,000	44,424	68,000
Content and Design	11,545	73,500	79,003	3,000
Outreach and Education	7,051	30,500	31,007	30,000
Administrative Allowance (10% of Annual Disbursement)	15,173	25,550	17,075	21,255
TOTAL AC Funds Released from Restriction	\$ 176,448	\$ 281,050	\$ 189,878	\$ 233,805

NASW Budget Report

Notes:

- A) AC money less 10% admin
- B) Proposed use of operating surplus covers additional expense of a large, metro meeting
- C) Distributed on 6/30 as 10% of total AC funds used during fiscal year)
- D) These three line items total \$103,800 for digital and print communications
- E) Special Projects
FY 2016-17
\$ 31,000 Website redesign
10,000 Internship Program
5,000 PIO Regional Meeting
\$ 46,000 TOTAL
FY 2017-18
\$ 65,000 Website redesign
90,000 WCSJ (incl diversity comm. sponsorship)
2,500 Diversity reception donation to WCSJ
\$ 157,500 TOTAL
FY 2018-19
\$ 3,750 Annual NWU Partnership
980 Parent Lunch @ SciWri18
16,200 Communications redesign and transition, one-time allocation
\$ 20,930 TOTAL
- F) Cloud subscriptions, e.g. SurveyMonkey, Submittable, AdobeCloud, DropBox
- G) 2017 actuals included a required special event policy for WCSJ2017
- H) Includes AC meeting 9/17

*Actual net always larger than expected due to budgeting AC income as -0- pending receipt of funding.



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NASW Annual Business Meeting

SIRI CARPENTER CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 7:30 A.M., ON OCT. 13, 2018, AT THE MARVIN CENTER, GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, IN D.C. OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE Siri Carpenter (president), Jill Adams (vice president), Alexandra Witze, and Nsikan Akpan (secretary).

Plaques of appreciation were presented to outgoing board members Brooke Borel, John Travis, Emily Willingham, Philip Yam, and Laura Helmuth. Carpenter introduced incoming board members Jennifer Cutraro, Lila Guterman, Sandeep Ravindran, Cassandra Willyard, and Sarah Zielinski.

Carpenter next provided a summary of the NASW board meeting, held the previous day. Particular mention was made of the NASW website redesign with great thanks extended to Russ Clemings (cybrarian), Kathryn Jepsen, A'ndrea Elyse Messer, and members of the internet committee.

Carpenter announced a partnership with the National Writers Union through which NASW members can receive a discount membership to NWU with full access to NWU's grievance and contract-advising services.

Carpenter outlined future steps for the governance committee that include a review of the nomination process for officers, board representation, and reforms related to political campaigns and fundraising.

Carpenter acknowledged the contributions of Lynne Friedmann, *ScienceWriters* magazine editor, who is leaving her post after 18 years at the helm to work on a book. "It's Lynne we have to thank for the magazine's dependably high quality," Carpenter said. A gift of appreciation was presented: a stylized *ScienceWriters* magazine cover featuring Friedmann's image and accolades.

Carpenter introduced new hires Sarah Nightingale as *ScienceWriters* digital and print editor and Ben Young Landis as NASW social media engagement editor.

The 2018 Diane McGurgan Service Award went to Czerne Reid for her leadership and years of exemplary volunteer service to NASW. (See page 30 for details on her initiatives to mentor budding science writers, as well as her training and networking efforts for science writers in Latin America and The Caribbean.)

Discussion turned to two proposed amendments to the NASW constitution and bylaws.

The first seeks to amend officer eligibility. It was brought forth by the petition process outlined in the NASW constitution and bylaws. The petition was signed by 38 members. The language is identical to a proposed amendment voted down by members in 2016.

The second amendment seeks to increase the number of

signatories required to bring a proposed amendment to a membership vote from the current proscribed 20 signatures to a threshold of five percent of the regular membership total. Functionally, that means about 110 signatures, based on current membership of 2,200.

The floor was open and, in the time remaining, dozens of members voiced their opinions (both pro and con) on both issues.

The meeting was adjourned by Carpenter at 8:15 a.m. ■

Five NASW Members Elected AAAS Fellows

NASW members **Karl Leif Bates, Ann Finkbeiner, Sue Nichols, Karen McNulty Walsh, and Jan Witkowski** have been elected fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. They are recognized for scientifically or socially distinguished efforts to advance science or its applications.

■ ■ ■

The following fellows were nominated by AAAS Section Y (General Interest in Science and Engineering):

Karl Leif Bates, director of research communications at Duke University, was recognized "for distinguished contributions as a dedicated and accomplished institutional science writer who has excelled at communicating research advances to the media and public."

Bates has been at Duke since 2007, where he writes, edits, and coordinates coverage of university research news from units across the campus. He also teaches science communication to faculty, staff and students and has mentored several aspiring science writers into careers. His career began with 15 years in newspapers, the first five covering school boards, illegal daycares, small plane crashes, and three-alarm fires in community journalism. Bates describes a science writing course in the master's program at Northwestern University, in the early 1980s, as an epiphany, but he had to wait until 1990 to exercise those writing muscles when the late *Ann Arbor News* took a chance on him as an environment writer. That beat quickly morphed to include science and medicine as well, giving Bates the entire University of Michigan to mine for stories. Three of those stories turned into a winning AAAS science writing entry in 1995.

Bates' service to AAAS includes 12 years on the EurekAlert! advisory committee and regular participation in the science writer mentoring program at the AAAS annual meeting. He has served on the annual meeting program committee for NASW and organized and hosted ScienceWriters2012 in the Research Triangle.

Ann K. Finkbeiner, a Baltimore-based freelance writer, was recognized "for distinguished contributions to public understanding of science through outstanding science writing, teaching, and mentorships."

A freelancer since 1983, Finkbeiner has written about most fields of science, with a focus on cosmology and astronomy. Early in her career, she wrote for *Mosaic*, *Science 8x*, and *The Sciences*, all of which are no longer published. She has also written for *Discovery*, *Sky & Telescope*, *Astronomy*, *Smithsonian*, *Science*, *Nature*, *Hakai*,



Karl Leif Bates



Ann K. Finkbeiner



Sue Nichols



Karen McNulty Walsh



Jan A. Witkowski

Knowable, and *Scientific American*. She has been a columnist for *USA Today* and *Defense Technology International* and has regularly reviewed books for the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Discover*, and *Nature*. She has written three books of her own and co-authored a fourth. Her book *The Jaxons* (Viking/Penguin) won the American Institute for Physics Science Writing Award in 2009.

For 25 years, Finkbeiner headed and taught in the graduate program in science writing at Johns Hopkins University. She is on the board of directors of *The Open Notebook* and is a co-proprietor of the group science blog *The Last Word on Nothing*.

Sue Nichols is recognized for “distinguished contributions to science communication across disciplines and across the globe, particularly for groundbreaking work to integrate communication practices with research endeavors.”

Nichols is assistant director of Michigan State University’s Center for Systems Integration and Sustainability, positioned at the nexus of traditional communications and applying journalistic sensibilities to research efforts. Committed to the idea that embedding science writers into the process of science yields not only more robust communication, but also strengthens research projects, Nichols has worked in eight countries on five continents, harvesting stories, photos and video, and training early-career scientists to strategically document their work. In 2007, she co-organized and presented an AAAS symposium on that topic. In February, she co-organizes another AAAS symposium on sustainable science methodology. Nichols also is a co-PI on a National Science Foundation (NSF) research grant, managing Broader Impacts as well as participating in shaping strategy.

She helps write grants and manuscript and devises strategies to increase academic citation rates. She has worked on community building and communications of CHANS-Net (The International Network of Research on Coupled Human and Natural System), growing the NSF-funded project to more than 1,800 members.

Nichols holds a B.A. in journalism and began her career as a reporter for the *Lansing (Mich.) State Journal* and *USA Today*, earning state and national awards for police and courts reporting. In between her years as MSU’s chief science writer and her current job she was communications director for the University of Michigan’s Energy Institute.

Karen McNulty Walsh, principal media and communications specialist at Brookhaven National Laboratory, was cited “for her distinguished contributions to science communication and public understanding of science, particularly for describing and translating technical research for the media and the public.”

McNulty Walsh joined Brookhaven Lab nearly 20 years ago as a principal media and communications specialist. Her role involves translating the complex science done at Brookhaven and communicating its benefit to society for a variety of audiences, including the

science-interested public, media, policymakers, and elected officials. She also coordinates an annual science communication workshop for undergraduate and graduate student research interns.

Her writing is often cited by the Department of Energy (DOE) for its effectiveness in telling the story of Brookhaven and the other national labs, and she has served as an expert panelist for science communication best practice discussions across the DOE complex. She has also helped organize several successful AAAS symposia on topics including addiction, nuclear physics, and energy research.

McNulty Walsh earned her bachelor’s degree in biology at Vassar College, and a master’s degree in journalism from New York University’s Science, Health & Environmental Reporting Program. Before coming to Brookhaven in 1999, she wrote science stories for children’s publications, and served as magazine editor for *Science World* and *Zillions*.

She has won multiple awards, including the 2016 Brookhaven Award in recognition of her outstanding service to Brookhaven Lab, and a series of “EdPress” Distinguished Achievement Awards between 1991 and 1998 for excellence in educational journalism.

■ ■ ■

The following fellow was nominated by AAAS Section G (Biological Sciences):

Jan A. Witkowski, former executive director of the Banbury Conference Center at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory (CSHL), was recognized “for his role in advancing science through leadership of the Banbury Center, holding discussion meetings critically reviewing key issues in biology and medicine.”

The Banbury Center is the small conference center at CSHL, holding meetings for up to 30 participants on topics that range widely across the biological sciences and science policy. During his 30-year tenure, Witkowski held over 600 meetings with over 12,000 participants. One of the most notable meetings combining science and policy was held in 1988, on DNA Technology and Forensic Science, which led to Barry Scheck and Peter Neufeld co-founding the Innocence Project.

Witkowski came to CSHL by a circuitous route, first carrying out research in London on Duchenne muscular dystrophy and then, in 1986, running a DNA diagnostics laboratory at Baylor College of Medicine. James Watson, co-discoverer of the DNA double helix and father of the Human Genome Project, recruited Witkowski to CSHL in part because of his writings on the history of science. Since being at CSHL, Witkowski has co-authored the textbook *Recombinant DNA* with Watson, and co-edited Watson’s book *The Annotated and Illustrated Double Helix*. His most recent book is a history of CSHL. ■



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Our Gang

Winter is here and with it comes an avalanche of news from our colleagues. Let's start with job news, which is plentiful.

After more than 14 years with the University of Maine's Maine Sea Grant, science communications specialist **Catherine Schmitt** has moved down the coast to the Schoodic Institute at Acadia National Park. She will be writing stories about past and present research in one of the country's earliest and most popular national parks. She will also conduct communications training for researchers working at Acadia and other national parks. Contact her at cschmitt@schoodicinstitute.org.

Kimbra Cutlip, who spent the last decade freelancing, will start the New Year with a new job as a science writer at the University of Maryland College of Computer, Mathematical and Natural Sciences, in College Park. Kimbra expects to keep busy: The college has about 1,000 principal investigators in fields as diverse as geology, entomology, neurobiology, atmospheric sciences, and quantum physics. For more info or just to be in touch email her at info@kimbracutlip.com.

Ivan Oransky, cofounder of the popular blogs Retraction Watch and Embargo Watch, science journalism instructor at New York University, and former editor at a number of leading science publications, announces that he is joining Medscape as its vice president for editorial. Actually, Ivan is rejoining Medscape, where his medical journalism career was launched nearly 20 years ago. Ivan-oransky@erols.com.

Medical editor **Barbara Boughton** has accepted a part-time contract with a small medical communications firm in Los Altos, Calif., with an all-female staff. She will be writing mostly about oncology, hematology, and immunologic treatments. Also new for Barbara is a part-time freelance editing gig with the American Academy of Ophthalmology. Contact her at barbara.boughton@gmail.com.

Science and technology writer/editor/podcaster **Ivan Amato**, who has been on the staff of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) three different times during his career, is back again. His latest AAAS gig is as a visiting researcher, a position funded by Schmidt Futures, founded by former Google CEO Eric Schmidt and his wife. Ivan will identify and write about so-called "moonshot" projects that, if they succeeded, could help solve societal, economic, or scientific challenges. By the way, he will be hiring writers to help him out. Contact him at ivanamato61@gmail.com.

Speaking of AAAS, **Lila Guterma**n, most recently associate director for content development at the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, has gone to work for AAAS's flagship publication *Science* as a deputy news editor. She will mainly be editing chemistry, biology, and biomedical stories.

(lila.guterma@gmail.com)

Jobs short takes: Former *Axios* reporter **Erin Ross** (eross@opb.org) is now with the Oregon Public Broadcasting's science and environment team; **Rachael Lallensack** (Rachael.lallensack@gmail.com) has joined *Smithsonian's* digital team as an assistant science editor; **JoAnna Wendel** (Joanna.r.wendel@nasa.gov) has moved from covering space at *Eos* to being part of the action at NASA headquarters as its Planetary Sciences Division's lead communications specialist; **Rachel Crowell** (rachelcrowell@gmail.com) is now co-editing the American Mathematical Society's "Blog on Math Blogs" and also math blogging herself for *Forbes.com*; **Chris Palmer** (crpalmer2009@gmail.com), after spending five years working at the NIH, is now associate director for advancement communications for Oregon State University's College of Engineering; and **Michelle Donahue** (michelle.z.donahue@gmail.com) is happy to announce that her first byline appeared in the *New York Times* science section in November, a cool story about how conservators in the earthquake-prone Andes Mountain are trying to save adobe buildings.



Not to brag, but it's rare when the finalists in a science writing awards competition doesn't include at least some NASW members. The last few months have been no exception.

For starters, two NASW colleagues were honored by the 2018 AAAS Kavli Science Journalism Awards: **Emily Anthes** (emily.antes@gmail.com), a freelancer for *Bloomberg Businessweek*, who won a Gold Award in the magazine category for her story on the search for a male contraceptive; and **Maggie Koerth-Baker** (maggie.koerth-baker@fivethirtyeight.com), who won a Gold Award for an online story for FiveThirtyEight about Pan Pan, the oldest known male panda at the time of his death in 2016.

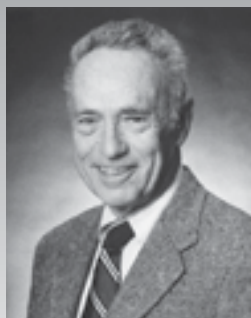
Eclipse chaser **David Baron** (dhbaron@gmail.com), who has traveled across the globe to watch solar eclipses over the past decade, has won the books category of the 2018 American Institute of Physics Science Writing Awards. *American Eclipse: A Nation's Epic Race to Catch the Shadow of the Moon and Win the Glory of the World* tells the story of the July 29, 1878 solar eclipse, which was visible in the wilds of the United States western frontier.

Paul Gabrielsen (paulgabrielsen@gmail.com), a science writer at the University of Utah, was the co-winner of a Golden Spike Award from the Utah chapters of the Public Relations Society of America. The award was for a seven-part podcast series entitled "The Secret of the Campus Cadavers," about human remains discovered on the university campus. They turned out to be medical research cadavers, about 100 years old, "unceremoniously disposed of at the time," as Paul politely puts it.

And just as fierce debate is underway about a Chinese scientist's claim to have created at least one genetically modified baby using CRISPR techniques, it appears that member **Amber Dance** was ahead of the curve on this story. She was a runner-up in The Hastings Center Awards for Excellence in Journalism on Ethics and Reproductive Genetics for her Nov. 9, 2017 piece in *Nature Biotechnology* entitled "Better Beings?" Amber discussed the societal and ethical questions of creating genetically altered humans, not a moment too soon. Contact her at adance.sw@gmail.com.

Happy 100th Birthday

Heartfelt wishes to David Perlman upon reaching a milestone birthday on Dec. 30, 2018. A newspaper reporter for more than seven decades, Perlman joined the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1940, started covering science in 1957, and didn't retire until 2017 at age 98. Learn more about his remarkable career in a Q&A in *ScienceWriters*, winter 2008-09 (bit.ly/2R2PVEZ). Send greetings to Dave at dperlman@sfchronicle.com. ■



David Perlman
Science Editor Emeritus
San Francisco Chronicle

NASW members **Josh Baxt** (joshb@baxtcomm.com), **Ramin Skibba** (raminskibba@gmail.com), and **Steve Murray** (steve@stevemurrayink.com) (all of whom are freelance writers) took home a boatload of science-writing awards at this year's San Diego Press Club's Excellence in Journalism Awards program. Of note, the trio swept the Magazine: Science/Technology/Biotech category. Also, Ramin received a coveted Best of Show awards as a "Rising Star" in recognition of someone who is well on their way to significant professional achievement.

Awards and fellowships short takes: **Bob Roehr** (bobroehr@aol.com) received a National Press Foundation fellowship on community health that took him to San Francisco in November for a day of briefings by experts in the field, followed by a "summit" at Kaiser Permanente; **Philip Yam** (pyam@simons-foundation.org) served as executive producer for the Fields Medal and other awards videos for the International Mathematical Union; **Cheryl Weinstock** (cherylpw@optonline.net) was chosen to participate in the Journalists in Aging Fellows Program, in Boston, in November; and **Amanda Heidt** (aheidt@mlml.calstate.edu), a graduate student at the Moss Landing Marine Labs, in California, won a California State University Monterey Bay-KQED Science Communication fellowship with KQED media in San Francisco.

■ ■ ■

Of course, all NASW members are science communicators of one kind or another, but it's always good to have news about colleagues who have made communication a major focus of their activities. There's quite a lineup this time around.

Jenny Cutraro, founder of Science Storytellers, an innovative program that pairs children with scientists and lets the kids ask the questions, reports that last summer she partnered with *Chemical and Engineering News* to bring Science Storytellers to the American Chemical Society's Kids Zone at the Boston Children's Museum. The event took place in conjunction with an ACS meeting held at the same time. On hand were some professional journalists to coach kids who needed help figuring out what kinds of questions to ask. Email: jenny@nasw.org

Of course, fostering good science communication also requires countering science miscommunication. **Liza Gross**

tells us that she has been invited to join the International advisory board of the recently established Organisation for Propaganda Studies. Liza says the UK-based organization is led by academics who research and analyze the historical and current use of propaganda, including manipulation of the media, in both autocratic and democratic regimes. Liza says that in joining the group she plans to "ramp up my work on 'sound science' groups, front groups and think tanks, corporate and government misuse of science, conflicts of interest and the use of science in the private interest." Email: lizagross@gmail.com

Bethann Garramon Merkle says that the Ecological Society of America has recruited her to start a Writing Science advice column for its bulletin. The new column will focus on "actionable advice" about science writing skills, including public engagement and communicating with journalists as well as grant and academic writing. Also this year, Bethann became the director of the Wyoming Science Communication Initiative, which will involve representatives from the University of Wyoming in a grassroots effort to boost science communication and engagement. Contact her at b.g.merkle@gmail.com.

Meanwhile, **Trace Dominguez** reports that he has quit his job at Seeker (formerly Discovery News) to found a new YouTube channel called "Uno Dos of Trace." Trace describes it as "a learning channel dedicated to teaching the public about science, technology, engineering, history, psychology, travel... there are no limits." Trace says the channel is growing rapidly, with new viewers and subscribers every day. ■

Letter to the Editor

Thank you to the NASW members who have reached out to me after my daughter Bethany Meissner's death in October, one day short of her 34th birthday. Bethany wasn't a science writer per se, but she understood the importance of explaining complicated science in terms lay people could understand. After thanking me for coming to D.C., right away Beth asked a close friend to explain the respirator. When the friend's explanation proved too jargony for this distraught mom, Bethany explained it herself in words that would rank at a sixth-grade reading level.

Bethany blogged about "Living With Cancer in the Internet Age." You can read her insights at bethanymeissner.com.

Kathiann M. Kowalski, *Freelance*
Fairview Park, Ohio ■

SCIENCEWRITERS WELCOMES LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

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Editor, *ScienceWriters*
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Regional Groups

NEW YORK

On Oct. 9, more than 40 SWINY members enjoyed an informative evening with author Randi Hutter Epstein, MD, MPH, whose current book is *Aroused: The History of Hormones and How They Control Just About Everything*. Dr. Epstein is a lecturer at Yale University, writer in residence at Yale Medical School, and an adjunct professor at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. She has also worked as a medical writer for the London bureau of *The Associated Press* and was the London bureau chief of *Physicians' Weekly*. The event was held at the home of Charles and Susan Fisher, who have hosted other SWINY book events. Conducting the interview of Dr. Epstein was SWINY co-chair David Levine. The discussion was followed by audience Q&A and book signing.

On Oct. 22, SWINY presented a tour of Germ City: Microbes and the Metropolis, a major new exhibit at the Museum of the City of New York. The group's guide was exhibit co-curator Anne Garner, whose day job is Rare Books curator at the New York Academy of Medicine. Exploring the complex, fascinating dynamics between infectious diseases and epidemics in the city, Germ City integrates a unique mix of digital interactive displays, historical artifacts, and contemporary artworks dating back over a century. After the private tour, most of the 17 participants adjourned to a nearby happy hour (undoubtedly taking extra care to not share germs with colleagues). The program was organized by Carol Milano.

NORTH CAROLINA

Science Communicators of North Carolina (SCONC) continues its popular monthly pizza lunches open to the public featuring scientific talks. In September, Melina Kibbe, Ph.D., UNC-Chapel Hill, presented *When Mice Are Men: Sex Bias in Biomedical and Clinical Research*. In October, Alzheimer's researcher Todd Cohen, Ph.D., UNC-Chapel Hill, presented *Normal Brain Aging and Inflammation*. In November, Solomon Bililign, Ph.D., North Carolina A&T State University, focused on aerosols and their effects on human health in *It's a Zoo Up There: Particles in the Atmosphere*. SCONC board members Ernie Hood and Fenella Saunders organized the events.

During ScienceWriters2018, SCONC President Marla Broadfoot and former SCONC member Ben Young Landis hosted the inaugural Regional Science Writers Congress which brought together representatives of regional science writers' groups around the country to share best practices, create a network for continued collaboration between groups, and support communities that would like to create their own science writers' group.

On Oct. 14, SCONC board members Katie Stember and

Fenella Saunders participated in SciREN, at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences (NCMNS). The event was designed to connect teachers to local scientists and create engaging science education activities for students from elementary school through high school, based on current scientific research.

The theme of SCONC's bi-annual Science in the Movies event, held on Nov. 14, was genetic engineering and gene editing. Featured movies included *Gattaca*, *Jurassic Park*, and *Rampage*, with discussion afterwards focused on both the portrayal and ethics of gene editing in the movies and in reality. Panelists included a film professor, a food scientist, and a bioethicist. Board member Jory Weintraub was in charge.

SCONC has its first intern! Eleanor Hook will be responsible for event support and ensuring the group's new science communication event calendar is as up-to-date and as comprehensive as possible.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

In October, a NCSWA field trip to the UC Davis Bohart Museum of Entomology gave science writers a chance to see giant butterflies and other star specimens in the \$6 million-plus collection. A scientist-guide explained a range of research projects the collection supports, from studies of biodiversity and evolution to public health concerns.

Field trippers also visited the university's Botanical Conservatory, which grows more than 3,000 species from around the world, including the infamous titan arum, with its child-sized bloom that smells like...rotting meat.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

In September, members of Northwest Science Writers met at the *Seattle Times* to discuss the art of the interview, where they delved into best practices for interviewing sources. Panelists included freelance journalist Madeline Ostrander, *Seattle Times* investigative reporter Mike Baker, KNKX's Sound Effect host Gabriel Spitzer, and Earthfix reporter Eilis O'Neill.

In October, NSWA presented a panel at the Oregon chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists' Building a Better Journalist conference about how to dig into science-based stories. Panelists included NPR senior science producer Jane Greenhalgh, *Bend Bulletin* reporter Markian Hawlyruk, and KGW meteorologist Matt Zaffino. The event's moderator was freelance journalist and NSWA board member Carol Morton.

Also, in October, NSWA attended an IMAX screening of the film *First Man*. After the film, Geoff Nunn, adjunct curator of space history at The Museum of Flight, talked with NSWA members about the Apollo missions and the movie's portrayal of Neil Armstrong.

In November, NSWA hosted a panel on the art of feature writing, discussing how to think about narrative and how to turn reporting into a compelling story. Panelists included *California Sunday Magazine* and *New York Times Magazine* contributor Brooke Jarvis, Nieman Storyboard editor Jacquie Banaszynski, and *National Geographic* contributor Craig Welch.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

On Oct. 27, SoCal Science Writers held a narrative master class in which 40 southern California science writers participated. *New Yorker* writer Nicola Twilley and *Outside* correspondent

Brendan Borrell dissected their stories in front of the audience, analyzing everything from pitch to publication and offering advice to the crowd. After lunch, participants workshopped their own pitches and offered feedback to each other.

SACRAMENTO

In 2018, Capital Science Communicators (CapSciComm) celebrated its fifth anniversary of community building and career encouragement in California's Capital Region: Sacramento, Davis, and beyond.

Founded in April 2013, CapSciComm connects local science communicators with resources and networks for professional advancement through local events and hosts events in conjunction with national meetings held in Sacramento (Society of Environmental Journalists and the Ecological Society of America annual meetings are examples). Its science tours have visited facilities like California ISO (Independent System Operator), Sacramento Zoo, SMUD (Sacramento Municipal Utility District) Rancho Seco station, and UC Davis Crocker Nuclear Lab, gleaned scicomm insights from communications professionals at those institutions.

CapSciComm prides itself on cultivating an environment where public science, science policy, and career advancement has thrived. Through CapSciComm encouragement, the number of local science cafés have grown from one to four; regular meetups connect state legislative staff with scicomm pros and graduate students; and the listserv, Twitter (@CapSciComm), and network word-of-mouth have directly converted job postings to new hires.

SAN DIEGO

The San Diego Science Writers Association, relaunched in July, has kept its momentum going by hosting monthly networking events and reaching some impressive milestones. Among them, SANDSWA is now a 501(c)(3) and has a logo, which makes the new incarnation feel even more official. SANDSWA member Monica May, who came up with the logo idea—a nod to the historic Point Loma Lighthouse—wins a year's free membership.



In October, several members participated in the Regional Science Writers Congress at ScienceWriters2018, in D.C. Back in San Diego, Heather Buschman, Patricia Fernandez, Lynne Friedmann, Katherine Leitzell, and Ramin Skibba brought the meeting to local members who couldn't attend, with a presentation of highlights from the annual NASW workshops.

Beer continues to be a popular sub-theme for SANDSWA events with well-attended happy hours taking place at local brew pubs. Upcoming events found at sandswa.org and on Twitter (@SANDSWA1). ■

North Carolina

Pass the Popcorn (below) SCONC's popular Science in the Movies series continues with a screening and discussion of the cinematic portrayal and ethics of gene editing.



Regional Groups

Events in the East and West



Sacramento

Science Tour (left) CalSciComm's motto is Keep Science Spicy. It does so with science tours for members. An example, a field trip to the decommissioned Rancho Seco Nuclear Generating Station, in Herald, Calif.

Red Hot Idea (below) CapSciComm takes its name from the pepper plant genus *Capsicum*.



Sustained Growth (below) CalSciComm recently celebrated its fifth anniversary of community building and career encouragement in California's Capital Region of Sacramento, Davis, and beyond.



AAAS Meeting Mentors

Nsikan Akpan
Christina Bennett
David Biello
Alan Brown
Teresa Carr
Jenny Cutraro
Barbara Gastel
David Grimm
Dan Ferber
Doug Fox
Eric Hamilton
Bill Loftus
Robert Irion
Macon Morehouse
A'ndrea Elyse Messer
Bryn Nelson
Christina Sumners
Kate Travis
Tom Ulrich
Chelsea Whyte
Ashley Yeager
Karen Zusi

AAAS Undergraduate Travel Fellowship Editors

Juli Berwald
Mollie Bloudoff-Indelicato
Erica Check Hayden
Amber Dance
Jeff Grabmeier
Laurel Hamers
Victoria Jaggard
Kendall Powell
Czerne Reid
Kelly Tyrrell
Ashley Yeager

Authors Coalition Liaison

Kendall Powell

Awards Committee

Barbara Gastel
Alla Katsnelson, *co-chair*
Jyoti Madhusoodanan,
co-chair
Jill Sakai

Communications Working Group and Selection Committee

Siri Carpenter
Jennifer Cox
Robert Irion
Kathryn Jepsen
Laura Helmuth
Kendall Powell
Matt Shipman
John Travis

Diversity Committee

Nsikan Akpan
Pakinam Amer
Juliet Beverly
Mollie Bloudoff-Indelicato
Jennifer Bogo
Maggie Koerth-Baker
Shraddha Chakradhar, *co-chair*
Robin Lloyd
Apoorva Mandavilli
Christina Selby
Marissa Shieh
Ramin Skibba
Ashley Smart, *co-chair*
Nidhi Subbaraman
Kelly Tyrrell
Philip Yam

2018 Volunteers

Education Committee

Rachel Butch
Jenny Cutraro
Amber Dance
Jeff Grabmeier
Laurel Hamers
Robert Irion
Czerne Reid, *co-chair*
Erik Vance
Sarah Webb
Ashley Yeager, *co-chair*

Fairness Committee

Christie Aschwanden
Deborah Franklin
Jeanne Erdmann
Jennie Dusheck
Laura Helmuth
Seth Mnookin
Emily Willingham, *chair*

Finance and Audit Committee

Joseph Caputo
Siri Carpenter
Matt Davenport
Diana Kenney
Laura Helmuth,
ex officio member
Marilynn Marchione
Sandeep Ravindran
Alexandra Witze,
treasurer and chair

Freelance Committee

Emily Anthes, *co-chair*
Rebecca Boyle
Sophia Chen
Jennie Dusheck
Doug Fox
Jennifer Frazer
Virginia Gewin
Sujata Gupta
Tara Haelle
Jennifer Huber
Jeff Hecht
Lynne Lamberg
Esther Landhuis
Robin Meadows
Kendall Powell, *co-chair*
Sandeep Ravindran
Sarah Scoles
Rina Shaikh-Lesko
Ramin Skibba
Kim Smuga-Otto

Governance Committee

Nsikan Akpan, *co-chair*
Sunny Bains
Mollie Bloudoff-Indelicato,
co-chair
Lina Genovesi
Mari Jensen
Gretchen Miller
Clara Moskowitz
Anjanette Riley
Curt Suplee
Arvind Suresh
James Urton

Grants Committee

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*In 2018, 456 volunteers, individually and collectively,
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*The New Year brings new
committee chairs and board members.*

*Please visit the About section of nasw.org
to meet the new volunteers and learn more about
what each committee does throughout the year.*

*If you are interested in adding your name to this
impressive list of volunteers, please contact the
committee chair, director@nasw.org, or watch nasw.org
for specific opportunities like the mentor program.*

[Special thanks to the **130+ ScienceWriters2018 speakers and moderators** who contributed their time and expertise to the SW2018 conference program.]

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Czerne Reid Receives Diane McGurgan Award

The annual Diane McGurgan Service Award honors exemplary volunteer efforts on behalf of NASW. Going above and beyond the call of duty through her enthusiasm, knowledge, generosity, and willingness to roll up her sleeves to get the work done is the 2018 award recipient, Czerne Reid.



Science writer Czerne Reid, Ph.D., is a lecturer and program director at the University of Florida

The announcement was made during the NASW business meeting held during ScienceWriters2018. Reid received a check for \$500, a certificate, and our everlasting gratitude and thanks.

Reid joined NASW in 2005 and over the years has been a tireless advocate for students and other newcomers to science writing as well as a leader in creating and expanding training opportunities for science writers in Latin America and the Caribbean.

As education committee co-chair since 2013, she has been intimately involved in planning and executing the highly regarded mentor program and internship fair at the AAAS annual meeting. She has also worked to put together the #one-minute-mentor lunch session, now in its second year, that takes place during the

ScienceWriters meeting.

"Czerne does everything at 120 percent, from brainstorming ideas for new programs to planning the social media campaigns for the education committee events to mentoring new students," said Ashley Yeager, education committee co-chair. "She also personally reads all of the travel fellows' stories and provides insightful feedback, making their stories crisp and engaging and providing them with an incredible editing and mentoring experience."

Reid's involvement in the 10th World Conference of Science Journalists (WCSJ 2017), in San Francisco, ran deep. She was co-chair of the regional committee on Latin America and the Caribbean, the powerhouse behind the planning of a pre-conference workshop for Latin American and Caribbean science writers, organized a range of activities for these attendees at WCSJ2017, and served as a judge for the WCSJ student travel fellowships.

Her next goal: Reid is committed to

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building a science journalism network in the Caribbean and connecting it to NASW. This is a tremendous undertaking.

"She is dogged," said CASW's Executive Director Ros Reid. "If anyone can make that happen, Czerne will."

Czerne Reid is the 22nd NASW member to receive the Diane McGurgan Service Award since the honor was established in 2001.



Know an outstanding volunteer deserving of recognition? Send a short letter of nomination to director@nasw.org. Deadline for consideration for the 2019 Diane McGurgan Service Award is August 15. ■

In Memoriam



Leslie A. Pray
Independent Science Writer
and Editor

Leslie Pray, 54, an NASW member since 2000, died on Nov. 3, 2018, after being deliberately struck by a vehicle while cycling near her home in Claremont, Calif. Pray was pronounced dead at the scene. The driver was arrested and charged with murder.

An independent science writer and editor, Pray first wrote about science in the first grade when, pencil in hand, she wrote a one-page report about bees.

"I don't know whether it was the writer or scientist in me who was trying to emerge when I wrote 'The Bee Report,'" she stated on her webpage. "My parents and teachers must have figured it was the scientist, because that's who was encouraged and prodded year after year, all the way to grad school and a Ph.D. in biology."

Pray received her bachelor's degree from UC Berkeley (1986) and graduate degrees from the University of Vermont (master's degree in zoology in 1994; Ph.D. in population genetics in 1997). After two years as an NSF postdoctoral fellow in environmental biology at Smith College, she became a freelance science writer.

Over the course of her career, she wrote manuscripts, papers, and articles on a wide range of issues in genetics, evolutionary biology, emerging infectious diseases, public health policy, and graduate education. Her clients included AAAS, American Chemical Society, U.S. federal government, and National Academy of Sciences. On behalf of the Institute of Medicine, Pray was a co-editor of *Biological Threats and Terrorism: Assessing the Science and Response Capabilities and Considerations for Viral Disease Eradication: Lessons Learned and Future Strategies*.

An elected member of Sigma Xi, Pray was the recipient of numerous scientific research awards, including a Jasper J. Loftus-Hills Young Investigator Award, Entomological Society of America John H. Comstock Award, and Society for Conservation Biology Best Student Paper Award. She was the recipient of an NASW travel

fellowship to attend ScienceWriters2014.

Pray is described by those who knew her as a brilliant, funny, and gentle soul who loved the outdoors, animals, writing, science, vegan cooking, and spending time with her loved ones.

A ghost-bike vigil was held in November in Pray's honor at the site of her death. Several hundred bicyclists, friends, and community members attended.



Donald J. Storch
Journalist, Columnist,
and Corporate PR Executive

Donald (Don) Storch, 84, a journalist, corporate public relations executive, issue management consultant, columnist, and author died Oct. 30, 2018, in Englewood, Fla. He was a member of NASW since 1963.

Born in East Orange N.J. in 1934, Storch began his career in 1957 as a general assignment reporter with the *Morristown Daily Record* in Morristown N.J., later serving as news editor. While with the *Daily Record* he was elected president of the News Club of Morris County.

In 1961, he joined the public relations department of CIBA Pharmaceutical Company, in Summit N.J., where he held a number of executive positions over a 19-year period including director of public relations for CIBA-GEIGY Corporation, now Novartis.

In 1980, he formed D. J. Storch & Associates Inc., in Summit N.J., a healthcare public relations firm serving major pharmaceutical companies for 30 years, including his former employer CIBA-GEIGY and Johnson & Johnson.

In 2000, he launched the Storch Report (DonStorch.com), a conservative blog that he operated until his death. He published a book of satire in 2014 titled *If a Passive-Progressive Leads From Behind, He is a Double Oxymoron*, a collection of columns from his blog, observing six years of President Obama's administration. In 2017, he published *Snakes in the Swamp*, outlining the first 100 days of President Donald Trump.

He was a graduate of Fairleigh Dickinson University, where he studied creative writing under Gorham Munson, one of the leading American literary figures of the 20th century. He served on active duty in the U.S. Navy during the Cold War.

In addition to NASW, he was a member of the New Jersey Press Association and the Counselors Academy of the Public Relations Society of America.

A gifted athlete, Storch was an All-State baseball player at Irvington High School, N.J., and upon graduation had tryouts with the New York Yankees, Brooklyn Dodgers, and the Boston Braves. He played baseball (and basketball) in college as well as semi-pro baseball for the Maplewood Maples in the Essex County League (New Jersey) and in the Navy. ■

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(*student)

SW2018 RECAPS:

PUBLIC TRUST

continued from page 3

building public trust is often a byproduct of good reporting. On that point, both sides seemed to agree.

"In the very long run it is important for science to recognize its own flaws and for us to help them recognize those flaws," Harris said, "so that we as taxpayers get our money's worth and progress in science accelerates."

MASS MEDIA

continued from page 4

Pineda Tibbs said, "Understanding who your audiences are along with the community. This can be done by activating and identifying your cultural and geographical connections so the audience can make those connections and become more engaged and involved in the importance of these media messages that are being disseminated beyond the brick and mortar walls, in my case, of the Monterey Bay Aquarium."

Speaker Jose Gonzalez, science educator at Latino Outdoors, straightaway delved into how the Latinx experience is helping shape the mainstream audience that science journalists are currently writing about.

"With shifting and increasingly diverse demographics, it's incumbent to all communicators to increase their awareness and practice of how their stories are reflective and engaging of these diverse communities. Case in point, Latinx communities," Gonzalez said.

Finally, de la Hoz talked about "hybridity" and "transculturation." She said she considers herself a "mestizo," another term relevant to the aforementioned topics.

The session was interactive and engaging because of learning activities/writing assignments that involved planning and editing stories that have to do with the impacts of plastic pollution in rural communities. It also wrapped up with a loud "*¡SI SE PUEDE!*" (Yes, you can!) from the audience.

[Session slides, activity sheet, and additional resources at bit.ly/2zZ4Vdn.]

TRAINING

continued from page 5

The session started with a game of Taboo, where participants were divided into two teams. Members from each team were asked to explain a word that

can have multiple meanings to the rest of the team. Words ranged from "cell" to "knock-out," and "assay" to "model." The exercise emphasized the importance of talking about complicated concepts without using scientific jargon.

Smith then touched on the different reasons why scientists may not be willing to communicate their work with the public, including appearing too self-promotional, having no time, and not trusting the reporters and science writers to understand the true depth or meaning of their work.

Hanlon took the floor and talked about ways to overcome these obstacles.

"Tweeting only takes seconds," he said, so lack of time should not be a constraint so long as the right way of communicating is chosen.

Hanlon then touched on the reasons why scientists should reach out to the public and a wider non-scientist audience. "[Because] most Americans cannot name a living scientist, there is a moral obligation to do so," said Shane.

He also mentioned that communicating their work to the general public can increase the chances of a scientist getting funding as well as increasing scientific citations. "Communicating their work to a wider audience can renew scientists' enthusiasm and increase their institutional recognition," Hanlon added.

The session continued with Connor-Simons talking about the four Cs of good communication: concise, conversational, clever, correct. To be concise scientists should "jot down two or three takeaways before an interview with a journalist," he said. They should "think about the answers to a few likely questions," he added, such as the ethical implications of their work. He moved on to being "conversational" or using plain-spoken language without oversimplifying facts and avoiding wordiness. "Being clever," Connor-Simons said, "is about making the message interesting, intuitive, and relatable."

He stressed the importance of being vivid and visual, of using metaphors and analogies whenever possible, and learning from others in the field who explain concepts in press when talking about similar things.

The session concluded with Aguilera talking about how scientists can be trained in using social media effectively to engage with non-scientists and the tools that are at their disposal. He also talked about the research communication program that is being developed at UC San Diego to help scientists better communicate with a wider audience. ■

WRITERS GIVING BACK

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A revelatory experience as a graduate student, sorting insects during a stint as a curatorial aide for the Smithsonian, set me on my path as a science writer, but to this day I've continued collecting insect and spider specimens for scientific study by universities and museums, helping fill out our understanding of the range, habitat, and identification of lesser-known critters.

The news in September of the fiery destruction of Brazil's 200-year-old Museo Nacional, and with it the loss of 20 million scientific and cultural artifacts, was a body blow to science. All the more tragic knowing the historic building that housed the collection was in disrepair and forced to close for a time the year before the fire when funds could

not be found to pay cleaning and security staff.

The Museo Nacional fire was not an isolated incident: In the past decade, one of the world's largest collections of venomous snakes, in Sao Paulo, and India's National Museum of Natural History were both lost to flames. Money woes dog many of U.S. collections as well. Dozens of critical herbaria and other collections have been shuttered. This includes the closure two years ago of the University of Maryland's important Norton Brown Herbarium, owing in part to NSF's decision to stop a long-time program of support for preserved and living biological collections.

So, I was eager to accept a nomination to a NASEM ad hoc committee to study the crisis facing biological collections, living and preserved, and the people who study them. The committee expects to issue its report in 2020, part of which is likely to include recommendations for public communication about and public engagement around collections and collecting. It will be a lot of work, and I have a steep learning curve on issues of museum finance and oversight, but it feels like closing the circle from that first blue-ribbon prize to this blue-ribbon committee. ■

PATRUSKY LECTURE

continued from page 11

ing a degree in electrical engineering from City College of New York and winning a science-writing fellowship at Columbia. After a dozen years as the research writer and science editor for the American Heart Association, in 1975 he embarked on a freelance science-writing career and took charge of the New Horizons in Science briefing program for CASW, becoming executive director in 1988. He has also orchestrated science journalism seminars for, among others, the National Academy of Sciences, Research to Prevent Blindness, the Kellogg Foundation, and the Ford Foundation.

Widely published and the author of two books, he is the recipient of the Science Journalism Award from the American Institute of Physics and the American Chemical Society's Grady-Stack Award. He is an honorary member of Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Honor Society, and for 18 years, until 2008, served as a member of the board of trustees of Science Service (now the Society for Science and the Public), publisher of *Science News*. Ben is a long-time member of the board of governors of one of the nation's oldest press clubs, The Society of the Silurians. ■

(source: CASW)

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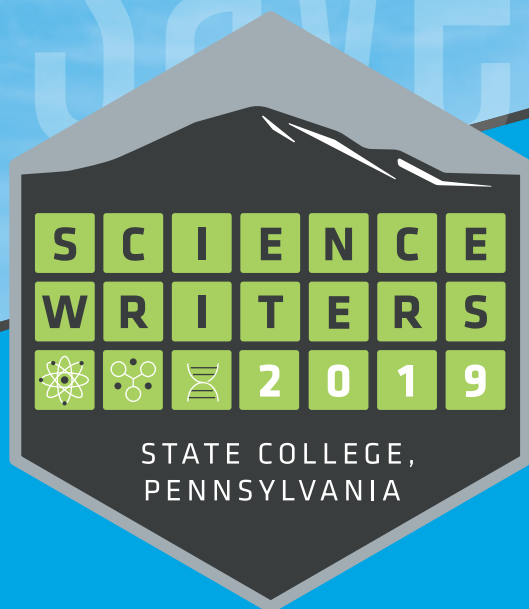
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Page Three

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