ScienceWriters™

National Association of Science Writers, Inc.

Fall 2010

SCIENCE
BLOGGERS
REBEL AGAINST SCIENCEBLOGS

REVISED
ARTICLE VIII SUBMITTED FOR MEMBERSHIP VOTE

WINNERS
OF SCIENCE IN SOCIETY JOURNALISM AWARDS

EMBRACE THE
TRANSITION
TO FREELANCE WRITING

WRITER FINDS ANOTHER CAREER IN
VIDEO

NASW CONCLUDES SERIES ON 75 YEARS OF SCIENCE
MILESTONES

ScienceWriters™
EST. 1952

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From The Editor

The U.S. Fire Administration of FEMA reported that last year more than 78,000 wildfires took place in the United States with nearly 9 million acres burned. The FEMA website cautions that if you live where there is an abundance of plants and other vegetation that can easily catch fire, you may be vulnerable to wildfires.

Images of wildfire certainly came to my mind as combustion on the Seed Media's ScienceBlogs network quickly turned to conflagration and the decampment, in a matter of days, by a number of bloggers. As mesmerizing as watching a flame, is considering the implications of new media in a story centered on a blog, reported through blogs, and ultimately analyzed in a blog (see page 1). NASW members weigh in on the matter in Cyberbeat (page 19).

Also in this issue are accounts by three writers who describe the challenges and opportunities of retraining as a video journalist, transitioning from staff to freelance, and embracing new tools for a new trade.

And, as you ponder the new, take a moment to enjoy Joel Strasser's reflections on what it was like to introduce high-technology concepts and products 50 years ago (page 24). ■

Lynne Friedmann

In This Issue

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Special Bylaws Section

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

Science Bloggers Take the Pepsi Challenge—and Win

by Tabitha M. Powledge

In July, there was startling news involving ScienceBlogs, a big group-blogging site that is home to some of the best-known science bloggers, mostly a mix of scientists who can write and journalists who know science. It is run by Seed Media, which publishes (or published) the apparently moribund and possibly decreased science magazine *Seed*. There's a joke in there about dead seeds, but I haven't the heart to devise a joke about the demise of a science pub.

On July 6, the ScienceBlogs newsfeed announced that the site would now be home to Food Frontiers, "a new project presented by PepsiCo":

> As part of this partnership, we'll hear from a wide range of experts on how the company is developing products rooted in rigorous, science-based nutrition standards to offer consumers more wholesome and enjoyable foods and beverages. The focus will be on innovations in science, nutrition and health policy. In addition to learning more about the transformation of PepsiCo's product portfolio, we'll be seeing some of the innovative ways it is planning to reduce its use of energy, water, and packaging.

I assume there was a certain amount of ROFL at this barefaced declaration, but when they recovered, some bloggers staged an uproar. Among the first to complain was the medico Orac, who writes at Respectful Insolence. Orac pointed out that ScienceBlogs had hosted commercially sponsored blogs in the past, but they were not written (or not entirely anyway) by the sponsors. The PepsiCo blog would be produced by PepsiCo (which indeed was already hosting a "blog" called Food Frontiers on its own site.)

Another early complainer was Paul Raeburn at the Knight Science Journalism Tracker, who is deeply worried about letting advertising bleed into editorial content, especially journalism.

In response to the complaints—not to mention the noisy departure of some of its star bloggers—ScienceBlogs management first announced that corporate content would henceforth be labeled "Advertorial." That unsuccessful ploy was replaced quickly by more dramatic action. PepsiCo was ousted from ScienceBlogs.

[An] unsuccessful ploy was replaced quickly by more dramatic action.

SELECTED RANTS, PRO AND CON

Here is a selection of rants from ScienceBlogs (and former ScienceBlogs) bloggers. They usually include links to posts by others, so you can follow this fracas for as long as your schedule permits.

Science writer Brian Switek explains at his blog, Laelaps, why he's leaving ScienceBlogs. The always-irrepressible ERV is, on this topic, even more irrepressible than usual. He takes the opposite view and reams out fellow ScienceBlog bloggers for intellectual inconsistency. Colorful but a tad repetitive.

Science journalist David Dobbs was also an early objector, and he has taken his well-known blog, Neuron Culture, to its own site. In this post he explains why he's not going back. "…I think it significant that some of the earliest, most emphatic, and sharpest actions and objections came from people with some grounding in journalism," he says. That's in part because letting Pepsi buy its way into ScienceBlogs erases the traditional dividing line between advertising content and editorial content, a line that is dear to a journalist's heart.

Physicist Chad Orzel explains why he's *not* leaving ScienceBlogs at his blog, Uncertain Principles. He doesn't consider himself a journalist, and he sees ScienceBlogs as simply a hosting platform, like Facebook.

SCIENCEBLOGS VS. *SEED* MAGAZINE

Mike the Mad Biologist is staying too, for the moment, and speculates that this dustup happened because management is much more interested in *Seed* magazine than in the blogs.

Meaning, I guess, that they made the Pepsi decision without much thought. Which explains why, given the unruly fractious crew of writers at ScienceBlogs, management was so clueless about what would happen when the news got out.

I haven't counted, so this guess may be quite wrong, but I think David Dobbs is correct that it was journalists who mostly raised the alarm. It's also my impression that the folks who have picked up their marbles and left the scene are mostly journalists too. The journos are folks who know all about the church-state wall between editorial and advertising, know why it exists, know why that wall is crucial to establishing and nurturing trust in what they write. Bloggers who have decided to remain tend to be scientists who have made their reputations in other venues and see blogging

BLOGGERS continued on page 32

Tabitha M. Powledge (tam@nasw.org) is a long-time science and medical writer and editor.

Science in Society Journalism Award Winners Announced


Susan Cohen


Christine Cosgrove


Martha Mendoza


Margie Mason


Charles Duhigg


J. Madeleine Nash

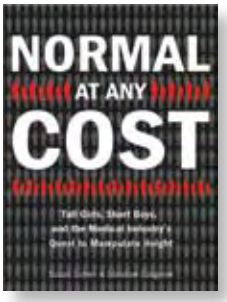
The winners of the 2010 Science in Society Journalism Awards, sponsored by the National Association of Science Writers, are:

In the Book category—**Susan Cohen** and **Christine Cosgrove** for *Normal at Any Cost: Tall Girls, Short Boys, and the Medical Industry's Quest to Manipulate Height* (Tarcher/Penguin)

In the Science Reporting category—a tie between entries from the Associated Press and the *New York Times*. **Martha Mendoza** and **Margie Mason** won for their Associated Press series "When Drugs Stop Working," and **Charles Duhigg** won for his *New York Times* series "Toxic Waters"

In the Local or Regional Science Reporting category—**J. Madeleine Nash** for her article "Bring in the Cows," which appeared in *High Country News*

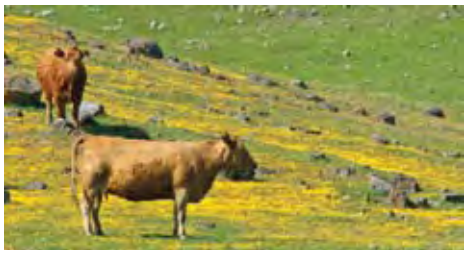
Commentary or Opinion category—The judges chose not to make an award this year in this category



In *Normal at Any Cost*, Cohen and Cosgrove tell the history of medical attempts to alter height in children. In the words of their publisher, "*Normal at Any Cost* is the first book to examine the full story of how the best and the worst of motives combined to turn a social problem into a medical one, and led to treating healthy children for height with government approval." One of the judges cited the book's "excellent and in-depth reportage, interestingly and breezily written, on an important (and to me, overlooked) medical/scientific issue. It has pretty much everything I look for: attention to the scientific process, human interest, a strong and consistent narrative." The Fund for Investigative Journalism gave the authors an award, while the book was in progress, to help fund the reporting.

"When Drugs Stop Working" appeared in Associated Press newspapers between Dec. 26 and 31, 2009. In reporting on the alarming growth in drug-resistant infectious diseases, Mendoza and Mason visited four continents, and they also were the first to report a U.S. case of extremely drug-resistant tuberculosis. One of the judges praised the series as being, "Well constructed, easy to follow, and doesn't beat you over the head with numbers." Another cited the series' "World-wide coverage, multiple sourcing, and overall story arc."

"Toxic Waters," appeared in the *New York Times* between Aug. 22 and Dec. 16, 2009. Duhigg, an investi-gative business reporter for the *Times*, documented the failure of the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act. In recent years violations have been soaring and polluters have been going unpunished. The series included web-based interactive databases that enabled readers to check their own water systems for contaminants and uncover local companies that had broken water pollution laws. The judges noted that in reporting the story Duhigg filed more than 500 Freedom of Information Act requests covering all 50 states and more than a dozen federal agencies. "That's the kind of effort we should reward," one of the judges said.



"Bring in the Cows," appeared in *High Country News* on May 25, 2009. It tells the surprising story of how cow grazing, normally thought to be an environmental scourge, is actually helping to preserve the Bay checkerspot butterfly, an endangered species that lives in the hills above Stanford University. One of the judges noted that similar stories have appeared frequently, "But in Nash's hands it comes across as fresh, and with a lot of local color and beautiful turns of phrase."

Winners in each category will share a cash prize of $2,500 to be awarded at a reception on Nov. 7 during NASW's ScienceWriters2010 meeting and workshop.

NASW established the Science in Society awards to provide recognition—without subsidy from any professional or commercial interest—for investigative or interpretive reporting about the sciences and their impact on society. The awards are intended to encourage critical, probing work that would not receive an award from an interest group. Beginning with the first award in 1972, NASW has highlighted innovative reporting that goes well beyond the research findings and considers the associated ethical problems and social effects. The awards are judged by accomplished peers.

The final judging committee consisted of Rick Borchelt, director of communication for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's mission area in Research, Education, and Economics; Nadia El-Awady, a Cairo, Egypt-based science journalist and president of the World Federation of Science Journalists; and Ivan Oransky, M.D., executive editor for Reuters Health. The Science in Society awards committee was chaired by Robert Finn, San Francisco bureau chief for the International Medical News Group. In addition to the final committee, NASW thanks the volunteers who served on preliminary screening committees: Alison Bass (freelance and Brandeis University), Mary Beckman (Pacific Northwest National Laboratory), Robert Finn (International Medical News Group), Sara Harris (Palladian Partners), Harvey Leifert (freelance), Robin Lloyd (*Scientific American*), Laura Newman (freelance), Hillary Rosner (freelance), Liz Scherer (freelance), Dodi Schultz (freelance), Pete Spotts (*Christian Science Monitor*), and Mitchell Zoler (International Medical News Group).

■ ■ ■

Entries for next year's competition, for material published or broadcast in 2010, are due Feb. 1, 2011. Entry forms will be available at **www.nasw.org** in December 2010. ■

NASW Board elections were held in August. Of NASW's 2100 regular members, 478 voted, either online or in person at the Aug. 9 special meeting in New York City.

The following officers and members-at-large commence their service on the NASW Board at the annual meeting in November and will continue until the annual meeting in 2012. Congratulations.

NASW Board Election Results

OFFICERS

President
Nancy Shute (freelance)

Vice President
Peggy Girshman
(*Kaiser Health News*)

Treasurer
Ron Winslow
(*Wall Street Journal*)

Secretary
Beryl Lieff Benderly
(freelance)

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Fifteen candidates vied for 11 positions. Elected are:

Terry Devitt (University of Wisconsin-Madison), **Dan Ferber** (freelance), **Bob Finn** (International Medical News Group), **Deborah Franklin** (freelance), **Jeff Grabmeier** (Ohio State University), **Michael Lemonick** (Climate Central), **Robin Lloyd** (*Scientific American*), **Rosie Mestel** (*Los Angeles Times*), **Tabitha M. Powledge** (freelance), **Adam Rogers** (*Wired*), and **M. Mitchell Waldrop** (*Nature*).

Many thanks to the board members who are cycling off in early November for their years of generous volunteer service to NASW: **Kelli Whitlock Burton** (freelance), **Glennda Chui** (SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory), **Robin Marantz Henig** (freelance), **Tom Paulson** (freelance), and **Vikki Valentine** (National Public Radio).

Marilynn Marchione Wins Victor Cohn Prize

Marilynn Marchione, a medical writer at the Associated Press, has been awarded the 2010 Victor Cohn Prize for Excellence in Medical Science Journalism for her compelling and enterprising reporting for a worldwide audience.

Marchione's wide-ranging daily and in-depth consumer health coverage has sought to bring medical science findings to readers in a way that is relevant to their own health choices. She was recognized for her insight and narrative skills as reflected in stories on the overuse of diagnostic radiation, the hazards of alternative medicine, the plight of severely wounded U.S. soldiers returning from Iraq, a preview of the world's first face transplants, and the dangers of soda increasing obesity.

The Victor Cohn prize, for a body of work published or broadcast within the last five years, was established by the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing. Marchione will receive a $3,000 check and a certificate in New Haven, Conn., on Sunday, Nov. 7, at an awards ceremony to be held in conjunction with ScienceWriters2010, the annual joint meeting of CASW and NASW.

The judges of the Cohn prize were impressed by Marchione's authoritative approach to timely medical issues and her ability to juggle the demands of day-to-day wire service coverage with in-depth reporting that is rich in human interest.

AP health and science editor Kit Frieden's nominating letter said that Marchione "has been at the front of the pack in reporting what's essential, compelling, and useful to ordinary people trying to make sense of it all." Former AP medical editor Daniel Q. Haney, a 2002 Cohn award winner, noted that "with the decline of newspaper medical coverage and the shortening attention span of the news business, her stories rise far above the clutter. They are clear, nuanced, graceful, and dead-on accurate. She helps steer the AP away from miracle cures in mice, the statistically weak clinical trials, and the other flotsam that can underpin medical coverage."

Marchione, based in Milwaukee, Wisc., joined AP as a medical writer in 2004 and, in September 2005, was the first to report that doctor and patients were trapped in flooded hospitals in New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. She came to AP after having spent 28 years as a reporter and editor at metropolitan daily newspapers, including the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, and *Akron Beacon Journal* in Ohio. Her work has been recognized by the Associated Press Managing Editors Association as well as health and medical organizations. She earned a degree in journalism from Kent State University.

This year's entries were judged by Ron Winslow, deputy bureau chief for health and science and medical writer at the *Wall Street Journal*; CASW president Cristine Russell, a freelance writer and senior fellow at Harvard's School of Government; and Ben Patrusky, CASW's executive director.

This marks the 11th presentation of the Cohn Prize for Excellence in Medical Science Journalism. The award honors the late *Washington Post* medical writer and health columnist Victor Cohn, who distinguished himself by the clarity, honesty and effectiveness of his reporting during a 50-year career. He was also a co-founder, in 1959, of the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing. ■

(Source: news release)

Print Guy Learns Video —*How's He Doing?*

By Ian Shapira

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"Story Lab" blog, The Washington Post*, posted Aug. 13, 2010*

Ian Shapira is a staff writer for *The Washington Post*.

Training Teenagers to be Science Journalists

BY RACHEL MAHAN

It was not Cathy Farrar's goal to transform her high school physics students into science journalists—at least not at first. She just wanted to encourage them to enter a writing contest.

The contest was the DuPont Challenge, a national essay contest that grew out of the 1986 Challenger shuttle disaster. Previous winning essays had followed a journalistic style, so to help her students, Farrar brought in former American Chemical Society editor and science writer Alan Newman.

Newman introduced Farrar's students to the fundamentals of science writing. Although none of the students won the challenge, the lessons in science writing seemed to improve their writing.

These first few classroom visits became the basis of a four-year $3.5 million grant from the National Science Foundation called Scientific Literacy Through Science Journalism or SciJourn. The research project is designed to answer the following question: Could educators teach high school students to become scientifically literate citizens using science journalism?

What science journalists do every day is a form of scientific literacy. They ask a question of current interest, research the topic using multiple credible sources, and then communicate the information in a way that can be understood by a broad audience. This process also complements the types of science students learn in school by getting them to answer questions of personal or public interest, such as what is Crohn's Disease or what are the hazards of automobile air bags.

"Knowing a great deal of formal science is not required to write these articles," says Carole Stearns, a member of the grant advisory board and former physical chemist and science teacher. "[The teenagers] have to have an interest and ability to seek and incorporate information—that's where the powerful learning comes in."

To make participating in SciJourn an authentic experience, the investigators decided that students would pitch story ideas, interview experts, respond to edits, and have their articles published in an online and print newspaper.

Based at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, principal investigators on the grant are Professor Wendy Saul, a literacy expert with a history of finding unique ways to improve science education; Associate Professor Joe Polman, an expert on learning environments

RACHEL MAHAN IS A GRADUATE OF NYU'S SCIENCE JOURNALISM MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM. SHE WORKED WITH THE TEENAGERS AT THE SAINT LOUIS SCIENCE CENTER AND IS NOW A PHD STUDENT STUDYING WILDLIFE ECOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA. ALAN NEWMAN CONTRIBUTED TO THIS ARTICLE.

and learning processes in science education; Newman; and Farrar, who is also pursuing a doctorate in education.

Much of the work since the grant began in 2008 has been conducted at high schools in and around St. Louis. Because of a prior relationship Polman had established, the team had the opportunity to host a newsroom at the Saint Louis Science Center. Participants in the science center's after-school youth-development program would staff the newsroom, where the newspaper would be published.

"I was very interested in creating authentic experiences," says Diane Miller, senior vice president of the department that runs the youth development program, called Youth Exploring Science (YES). The program is unique because it also serves as a job for predominantly at-risk, minority teenagers, who are paid and learn work skills.

Could educators teach high school students to become scientifically literate citizens, using science journalism?

After the investigators tested their approach in local high schools during the academic year, they began working with their science center newsroom staff in the summer of 2009.

That summer, the eight teenagers, ages 14 to 18, published 14 stories at scijourner.org and produced three issues of the newspaper *SciJourner*. Article topics included Farrah Fawcett's anal cancer and the nutritional value of lunches at the science center.

Teaching teenagers to think like science journalists was not always straightforward. From their work in local high schools, the investigators had already learned that the five-paragraph essay—a form of report-writing that is ideal for grading on performance tests—had become deeply ingrained. Some students did not know how to modify this structure to suit their needs and had little experience with other forms of writing.

Moreover, the teenagers did not know how to effectively search the web, attribute the information they found, seek multiple credible sources, interview adults, or revise copy. Many students who participate in SciJourn struggle with basic scientific literacy skills, tackle topics that are too broad, or plagiarize by "cutting and pasting."

To counter these problems, the investigators and colleagues created lessons that covered rules for searching the web, the inverted-triangle structure, guidelines for interviewing and quoting, etc. These lessons will be published in a forthcoming book for educators from the National Science Teachers Association Press.

There have been pleasant surprises, as well, that taught the team how to engage teenagers. One of the YES newsroom teenagers, Desire'e Redus, collected original data in the form of a Facebook poll. She asked approximately 50 people how they use the social network to indicate their personal relationships.

"We were excited to write our articles because they are something we chose; something we were passionate about," recalled Redus, 18, who plans to become a journalist.

Indeed, some of the best stories that summer were drawn from personal experience.

"I liked the [health risks of] tattoo[s] article," said Ariel Stavri, 18, who has several tattoos of his own, "because I got to interview someone." In that case, he interviewed a local tattoo artist.

KiOntey Turner, 18, who plans to become a medical doctor, said, "there is no point in writing about something if it doesn't impact anybody." She wrote Teen EMT, a column about her experiences riding on a St. Louis city ambulance as part of a high school program.

The teenagers also learned to be better writers.

"I tend not to use 'I' a lot anymore," said Stavri, who plans to study biochemistry. "If I write something, it is more reported—state the facts, show two different points of view."

"I have had to learn to eliminate my own biases," said Turner.

The Saint Louis Science Center's Diane Miller agrees that the teenagers learn a lot about writing. "There's a way we think when we're writing, and somehow SciJourn has made that transparent to kids."

To date, six print issues of *SciJourner* have been produced and over 75 science articles published online. Included in those are five videos, three podcasts (including an interview with Ira Flatow from National Public Radio's *Talk of the Nation: Science Friday*), and an illustrated walk using Google's map technology. Traffic to scijourner.org is building incrementally. The most popular story has around 4,200 hits; 21 articles have 500 or more hits. In addition, several of the YES newsroom teens have served as peer editors and graphic designers for the newspaper.

The team's next task is to determine how to train educators to act as editors so that the SciJourn program will remain sustainable in St. Louis.

Many teenagers may be involved in theater or community service, said Carole Stearns from the grant advisory board, "but [SciJourn] is rather unusual and I think that might be part of its great appeal." ■

Featured Column

Scholarly Pursuits

Academic research relevant to the workaday world of science writing

by Rick Borchelt

Science at the Interface

The current issue of the Ecological Society of America's journal Frontiers in Ecology focuses on science communication and the scientists who could (should?) be doing it.

The Ecological Society of America has made it very easy for me to compile this issue's collection of research news you can use. The current issue of their journal *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* is all about science communication about environmental issues, and many of the articles treat how scientists and science-performing organizations can and should engage more deeply in advocacy about those issues. Despite the seemingly narrow focus on ecology, the applicability of the nine articles and two commentaries in this issue (**http://www.esajournals.org/toc/fron/8/6**) extends well beyond environmental issues.

Andrew Revkin in his guest editorial summarizes the range of topics nicely: "Specialized journalists now occupy a shrinking wedge of a fast-growing pie of light-speed media. This reality threatens to erode the already limited public appreciation of science. But the situation also presents a great opportunity—and responsibility—for scientists, their institutions, and their funders. Institutions that thrive in this world of expanding, evolving communication paths are those willing to engage the public (including critics) and to experiment with different strategies." Perennial opinion-giver on all issues science communication related Matt Nisbet does two star turns in this issue, as coauthor of both a commentary on audience analysis on climate change issues, and for the kick-off article "Restarting the Conversation: Challenges at the Interface Between Ecology and Society." It's this latter theme that animates the collection: the interface between organizations and people who do science, those who report or communicate science, and those who—like Congress and the public—consume information about science.

All of the articles bear reading, and they're much stronger as a collection than as individual articles, but I've picked two with I think the greatest reach and generalizability for readers of *ScienceWriters*.

■ ■ ■

Whitmer, A. et al. 2010. The engaged university: providing a platform for research that transforms society. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 2010 8:6, 314-321.

Borrowing a recent term to enter the science communication discussion, "engaged research," Whitmer and colleagues argue for a greater level of direct involvement of academic scientists and academic researchers to "address environmental problems" by playing a much greater role in the translation of academic research to the public and to decision makers. "Engaged research," they write, "has the potential to transform our fundamental knowledge of human and natural systems and to develop solutions for the world's ongoing environmental challenges." The problem as they see is not so much innate reluctance of academic scientists to enter the fray as it is reflective of institutional and structural issues—an assumption that's never supported, unfortunately, but the article is still valuable for its attention to the inadequacy of peer review to help the public and decision makers understand science, the lack of training for undergraduate and graduate students in how to engage publics in discussion of their research, and the absence

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

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

of a reward system for public engagement. In what will strike many readers as one of the great understatements of the article, the authors note that, "Clearly, many of the activities (including stakeholder interactions) that scholars use to engage society do not complement the current guidelines for tenure and promotion in academia."

Engaged research has the potential to transform our fundamental knowledge of human and natural systems and to develop solutions for the world's ongoing environmental challenges.

The solutions vary, Whitmer et al. say, including the creation of special issue-oriented centers devoted to likely topics of societal concern. "Support beyond basic administrative assistance, such as science writers and community engagement specialists, may be needed to facilitate this work," they note. "In addition, universities should consider promoting collaborative research through strategic cluster hires of interdisciplinary faculty around topics of critical concern." And money talks, obviously: "Perhaps the most powerful tool at their disposal is funding: designating funds (however limited) for solutions-oriented work sends a strong signal that such work is valued," they write. "Other helpful mechanisms include publicly recognizing the work of these researchers; supporting faculty in networking and collaborating to develop their research agendas; engaging students of all levels to impress the importance of this work; and publicly reinforcing the notion that research can contribute to both knowledge and solutions."

■ ■ ■

Meyer, Judy L., et al. Above the din but in the fray: environmental scientists as effective advocates. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 8(6): 299–305.

Scientists can be objective and effective advocates without this being a contradiction in terms, Meyer and colleagues argue; "While engaging in 'the fray' of policy making is not for everyone, there is within the scientific community an honorable tradition of doing so and ample evidence that policy decisions can be greatly improved when scientists provide both a dispassionate assessment of the relevant science and informed opinions and policy recommendations."

The challenge, the authors agree, is making sure that scientists stick to their knitting and resist the temptation to speak beyond their expertise. "Effective advocacy requires scientists to speak only to what they know," they caution. Policymakers may want the assurance of specific recommendations, they note, "but transparency demands that scientist-advocates be explicit about their values" when those values—like a commitment to biodiversity—drive those recommendations. Among the authors' other tips for scientists turned advocates: Accurately characterize the best available, policy-relevant science; clearly and thoroughly present the argument; accurately characterize scientific uncertainty—avoid guesswork; be open to revising a policy recommendation in light of new information; avoid hyperbole; and clearly acknowledge when expressing a personal opinion or making policy recommendations on issues that lie beyond the bounds of one's technical expertise.

One way the authors recommend that scientists begin to explore advocacy activities is with environmental advocacy organizations. "As members of society, environmental scientists have a responsibility to bring their expertise to the decision-making process; working with advocacy organizations is an effective way to do this," Meyer and colleagues write. Scientists can contribute not just ideas and concepts to these interactions, but robust methodologies and research practices as well. "Not only will this result in more effective decision making, but the interaction between the scientist and the advocacy organization can directly benefit both."

Not addressed in this article, however, is how media will view the credibility scientist-advocates they've come to rely on as unbiased sources.

Effective advocacy requires scientists to speak only to what they know.

And here's one item *not* from the journal:

■ ■ ■

Priest, S. H. 2010. *Encyclopedia of Science and Technology Communication*. London: Sage Publications Inc. 1,100 pp.

In the interest of full disclosure, I am both an editorial board member and contributor to this effort, but I think I'm on safe ground saying this massive effort will be the benchmark in the field for some time. Editor Susanna Hornig Priest at the University of Nevada Las Vegas (also the editor of the peer reviewed journal *Science Communication*) has assembled more than 200 individual authors who produced more than 300 individual entries on pretty much every major science communication topic from A-Z in this encyclopedia. Coverage ranges from the theoretical ("Discourse Analysis and Science") to the practical ("Public Engagement") to the luminary ("Stephen Hawking"); each entry has its own bibliographic resources for further reading. At two volumes, about 1,100 pages, and an official price tag of $350, it isn't light bedtime reading—but it is a powerful compendium of ideas and trends in the field of science communication. It also comes in digital form, which will make searching (by term using electronic search or full index in the print version, or cross-referenced by theme in both print and electronic) even easier. Even with my vested self-interest (sales, sadly, don't affect my take on this project—it was all writer fees up front!), I can safely say there isn't anything remotely like this out there currently. ■

I think I'm on safe ground saying this massive effort will be the benchmark in the field for some time.

How I did it: The Transition From Staff to Freelance

By Dawn Stover

Leaving my last job was easy: I got laid off, along with 104 other Time Inc. employees. My boss called with the news on the morning of my 45th birthday. Like so many other journalists, I had finally acquired enough experience and seniority to make myself unaffordable.

Getting a pink slip after nearly two decades of loyal service wasn't painless. But unlike a lot of people who find themselves unemployed, I was prepared for the change. And I embraced it.

Many journalists view freelancing as a default position: If you lose your "real" job, you'll have to freelance for a while until you find a new job. That's not how I saw things. Losing my job didn't automatically make me a freelancer; I *chose* freelancing after thinking carefully about other options and deciding that freelancing was what I really wanted to do.

It's fine to move back and forth between staff jobs and freelancing during your career, but if freelancing is your "Plan B," you aren't giving it your best shot. And if what you really want is another staff job, you may find it difficult to develop a successful freelance business and search for a job at the same time.

I began developing my business years ago, when I was still a junior staffer. Like many editors, I did occasional freelance work over the years; careful to accept assignments that would not conflict with my day job.

Transitioning to full-time freelancing went smoothly for me because long before I got laid off, I asked my employer to reduce my schedule (and my pay) by 30 percent. My plan was to devote my 1.5 days "off" each week to freelancing. In reality, I used a lot of that freed-up time in the kitchen and garden, but it gave me a taste of the freelance life.

I lost my job but I got my life back.

When you get laid off, it's natural to feel angry and resentful toward your former employer. I told myself that the decision wasn't personal, just business. I liked and respected the people I had worked with, and I hoped to work with them again in the future.

Although my job was terminated, my former boss retained me as a consultant and kept me on the masthead. That made the

Dawn Stover was a staffer at *Popular Science* and Harper's magazines before becoming a full-time freelancer in 2006.

transition easier for both of us. For months after my severance, I continued to participate in staff meetings and e-mail discussions. Eventually that relationship evolved into one more typical of a freelance writer and a client.

Affiliating with your former employer may not be possible, but it doesn't hurt to ask. Your departure leaves a hole, and it may work to your advantage to help fill that hole as a freelance contributor. When you lose your job, you lose part of your identity—and your access to sources. Getting a new title can help restore some of that lost identity and open doors.

If your former employer isn't game, you could try to affiliate with another publisher or outlet as a "contributing editor." Typically people with this title don't actually edit anything but are expected to bring ideas, contacts, and content to a staff. Some contributing editors get retainers in exchange for a certain amount of exclusivity.

Regardless of whether you continue working with your former employer, you should network like crazy. I contacted former colleagues who had already been through a layoff to get their advice. I joined several freelance listservs. I started using social networking tools like LinkedIn and Facebook. I spread the word that I was available for freelance work.

My early days as a full-time freelancer can be summed up by two maxims: 1) It is all about who you know, and 2) What goes around, comes around. Almost all of my assignments during that period came from people I had met earlier in my career—including people I had mentored who were now in a position to help me.

…if freelancing is your "Plan B," you aren't giving it your best shot.

The uncertainty of freelancing calls for a conservative financial strategy. My husband (also a freelancer) and I keep a big balance in our savings account and transfer money regularly to our checking account for living expenses. Occasionally we experience delays in payment. When that happens, we dip into our savings account but pay back the "loan" as soon as the next check arrives. We make quarterly tax payments

FREELANCE continued on page 33

Dress for Success!

Just don't expect the IRS to help you foot the bill

By Julian Block

Your latest book is going gangbusters, the reviews are to die for, and sales are off the charts. Oprah wants to schmooze, and you're green-lighted for Dr. Phil, Regis, and Ellen. On the other hand, you've been chained to your keyboard for a year, and your wardrobe shows it!

As a media favorite, it's crucial that you are suitably dressed for chats with television's glitterati. My advice for men: Wear a jacket, tie, and pants. Whether this is a three-piece suit or a blazer and slacks is your call. But unless you seek to establish that you're sartorially disadvantaged, try to look as serious as if you were applying for a loan.

My advice to women, gleaned from observing those who regularly show up on TV: Wear a jacket with long sleeves—not a dress or a short-sleeved jacket. You'll look more serious. Strong, bright colors are best; avoid black or white. Overdo your makeup by about 10 percent, but tone down the jewelry and accessories. What interest viewers are your opinions, not your unusual necklace.

The right outfits don't come cheap. So how about easing the pain to your wallet by writing off what you wear to interviews that result from the fruits of your labor? Don't even think about it. Generally, clothing costs are not deductible as business expenses. They are considered nondeductible personal expenses.

The IRS and the courts agree that no write-offs are allowed for clothing that's adaptable to general wear off the job. It's no excuse that you need to be fashionably or expensively dressed for TV interviews. Your outfits are obviously appropriate away from work.

For example, the Tax Court threw out deductions for suits bought by Edward J. Kosmal, a Los Angeles deputy district attorney who planned to leave government service. Ed decided that the right way to impress his future employers and colleagues was to upgrade his wardrobe to the sartorial standards of a "big-time Beverly Hills P.I. (personal injury) attorney." The court denied the deductions because, unquestionably, the clothes were fitting for ordinary wear.

HAIRSTYLING AND MAKEUP

The IRS and the courts sometimes differ on deducting hairdressing costs. The IRS classifies such payments as nondeductible personal expenses, even for a big-name New York fashion designer like Mary McFadden, who's in the public eye and "noted professionally for her distinctive hair style."

However, an IRS defeat occurred in 1978 when the Tax Court sided with Margot Sider. Margot wrote off the cost of 45 extra beauty-parlor visits that were made, she argued, only because her hairstyle was an integral part of her job demonstrating and selling "a high-priced line" of cosmetics in a department store to a "sophisticated clientele." As soon as she stopped selling, she went back to a simpler style.

At her trial, Margot cited a 1963 Supreme Court decision written by Justice John Marshall Harlan: "For income-tax purposes Congress has seen fit to regard an individual as having two personalities: One is a seeker after profit who can deduct the expenses incurred in that search; the other is a creature satisfying his needs as a human and those of his family but who cannot deduct such consumption and related expenditures."

Margot maintained she'd spent the amount in issue as a "seeker after profit," not as "a creature satisfying her own needs." That satisfied the judge, who ruled she was entitled to fully deduct expenditures beyond "the ordinary expenses of general personal grooming." ■

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

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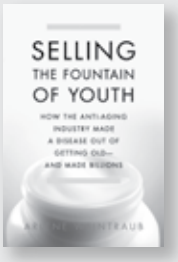
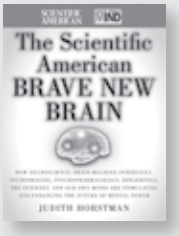
Selling The Fountain Of Youth: How the Anti-Aging Industry Made a Disease Out of Getting Old—And Made Billions **by Arlene Weintraub (NASW) published by Basic Books**



The anti-aging industry used to revolve around powder and paint—subtle agents to enhance beauty and help one age gracefully. Now, the business has been overrun by steroids, human growth hormone injections, plant-based "bio-identical" hormones, and endless web ads for red-wine extract. An associate editor at *Business Week*, Weintraub investigated anti-aging marketing from the Internet promoters behind the rise of açai berries to the backrooms of local pharmacies where made-to-order, nonregulated compounds are produced. She looked into the actions of celebrity promoters to the self-medicating doctors who run chains of rejuvenation centers that tout "miracle" cures. What she found were products and treatments based on hope and weak science consumed by patients with no idea of the risks posed. To research the book, Weintraub interviewed well-known, anti-aging doctors and some of their patients, as well as scientists and physicians who are trying—mostly in vain—to warn patients away from anti-aging medicine ■ *Weintraub can be reached at 201-683-8006 and www.arleneweintraub.com. The book's publicist is Michele Jacob at michele.jacob@perseus books.com. Website for the book is www.sellingthefountainofyouth.com.*

The Scientific American Brave New Brain: How Neuroscience, Brain-Machine Interfaces, Neuroimaging, Psychopharmacology, Epigenetics, the Internet, and Our Own Minds are Stimulating and Enhancing the Future of Mental Power **by Judith Horstman (NASW) published by Wiley**

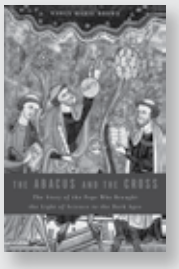


Horstman, a Sacramento, Calif. freelance, presents a look at the future of the brain, based on articles from *Scientific American* and *Scientific American Mind* magazines, and the work of today's visionary neuroscientists. She describes how scientific breakthroughs and research are turning science fiction into science fact. She describes:

- How partnerships between biological sciences and technology are helping the deaf hear, the blind see, and the paralyzed communicate
- How our brains can repair and improve themselves, erasing traumatic memories
- How we can stay mentally alert longer—and how we may be able to halt or even reverse Alzheimer's disease
- How we can control technology with brain waves, including prosthetic devices, machinery, computers—and even spaceships or clones
- Insights into how science may cure fatal diseases, and improve our intellectual and physical productivity.

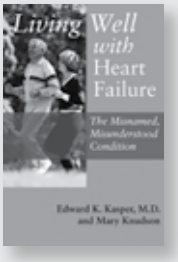
Horstman is also the author of The Scientific American Day in the Life of Your Brain. *She can be reached at 916-363-2140, judithhorstman@comcast.net, or www.judithhorstman.com. The book's publicist is Michael Onorato at 701-748-6361 and monorato@wiley.com.*

The Abacus and the Cross: The Story of the Pope Who Brought the Light of Science to the Dark Ages **by Nancy Marie Brown (NASW) published by Basic Books**



The popular picture of the Dark Ages is wrong, according to Brown, a Vermont freelance. "The earth wasn't flat. People weren't terrified that the world would end at the turn of the millennium," she writes. "Christians didn't believe Muslims and Jews were their mortal enemies. The Church wasn't anti-science." In fact, the pope in the year 1000 was the leading mathematician and astronomer of his day. His name was Gerbert of Aurillac and he was known during his lifetime as "The Scientist Pope." Born a peasant, he ascended to the pinnacle of the Christian world thanks, in large part, to his knowledge of science and his love of books. Using medieval letters and modern reportage, Brown transports readers to Gerbert's world where, as a professor of mathematics at a French cathedral, Gerbert was the first Christian to teach math using the nine Arabic numerals and zero. He wrote treatises on acoustics and logic and tutored kings and emperors. As she reconstructs the strangely illuminated Europe of the Dark Ages, Brown reminds readers that the major conflicts in our world today—between Christianity and Islam, between religion and science—are products of our own age, not historical inevitabilities. ■ *Brown can be reached at nmb@nasw.org. PR for the book is Caitlin Graf at caitlin.graf@perseusbooks.com and 212-340-8162. The book's website is www.nasw.org/users/nmb/Abacus.html.*

Living Well with Heart Failure: the Misnamed, Misunderstood Condition
by Edward K. Kasper M.D. and Mary Knudson (NASW) published by The Johns Hopkins University Press



In 2003, Mary Knudson was shocked to receive a diagnosis of heart failure. She went home and made out a will. But as a health journalist she also began researching heart failure and learned that her cardiologist did not have her on the treatments recommended by a national panel of heart specialists. Four cardiologists later, she received treatments that had proven science behind them. Her health improved and she eventually got well. She asked that fourth cardiologist, Edward K. Kasper, M.D., now the clinical director of cardiology at Johns Hopkins Hospital, to write a book with her that would alert the public about this growing epidemic. "Our mission was a search for the truth about all aspects of heart failure," said Knudson. "In this book we say what works and what the scientific evidence behind it is, and what harmful side effects to watch out for with diagnostic tests, medicines, and implanted devices." The book is written primarily for people who have heart failure or are at risk for getting it and their families. But doctors and nurses will also learn from it. "I found this book to be a key new resource for patients and families, as well as professionals," said Sue Wingate, immediate past-president of the American Association of Heart Failure Nurses. ■ *Knudson can be reached at 301-495-9379 and knudson@erols.com. The book's publicist is Kathy Alexander at ka@press.jhu.edu. The book's website is http://www.livingwellwithheartfailure.com.*

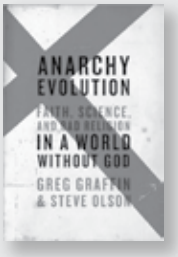
Taking Science to the People: A Communication Primer for Scientists and Engineers
edited by Carolyn Johnsen (NASW) published by University of Nebraska Press

The American public, government, and the news media continually grapple with myriad policy issues related to science and technology, including global warming, energy, stem-cell research, health care, childhood autism, food safety, and genetics, to name a few. Journalists have typically bridged the gap between scientists and the public, but the times now call for more engagement from the experts. *Taking Science to the People* calls on scientists and engineers to polish their writing and speaking skills in order to communicate more clearly about their work to the public, policy makers, and reporters who cover science. The authors represent a range of experience and authority, including distinguished scientists who write well about science, federal officials who communicate to Congress about science, and science journalists who weigh in with their own expertise. In this volume, scientists, engineers, and journalists will find both a convincing rationale for communicating well about science and many practical methods for doing so. Johnsen teaches science writing in the college of journalism and mass communications at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. NASW member contributors are: David Ehrenstein, Warren Leary, Sidney Perkowitz, Boyce Rensberger, and Abby Vogel. ■ *Johnsen can be reached at 402-472-5840 and cjohnsen2@unl.edu.*

Project Seahorse
by Pamela S. Turner (NASW) and photographs by Scott Tuason published by Houghton Mifflin

What woman hasn't said to her husband: "You should just feel the pain of giving birth!" In this book, Turner describes how the male seahorse's brood pouch bulges like a balloon: "It puffs in and out, in and out, like the cheeks of a trumpet player. The seahorse pumps with his tail, bending and folding like a jackknife, working hard to give birth….The mother seahorse waits nearby. She does nothing to help the father or the babies." The book does have beautiful pictures of sea horses and their neighbors throughout. Turner has been scuba diving for 25 years. Tuason is one of Asia's premier outdoor photographers. Turner, an Oakland, Calif. freelance can be reached at 510-547-8565 and pstrst@pacbell.net. ■ *Jennifer Taber is publicity manager at Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Children's Book Group: 617-351-3671 and jennifer.taber@hmhpub.com.*

Anarchy Evolution: Faith, Science, and Bad Religion in a World Without God
by Greg Graffin and Steve Olson (NASW) published by itbooks/ Harper Collins

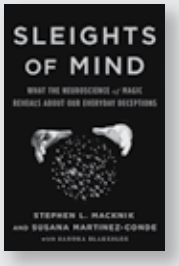


First author Greg Graffin, received his Ph.D. from Cornell and teaches evolutionary biology at UCLA. He is also the co-founder and lead singer of the punk band Bad Religion. Together with co-author Olson, they've produced a work that is partly a science book about evolutionary biology (the limits of natural selection in guiding evolutionary change) and partly a memoir about Graffin's 30 years in music and science. Graffin was a high school sophomore in 1980 when he started the band. As a young academic, he found himself in charge of teaching premed students that understanding evolution is important even for doctors. Their inquisitiveness forced Graffin to bone up on classical embryology. "My advisor told me 'you never really learn a subject until you have to teach it,'" he said. "Invariably, I used music as an escape from the tedium of academics….Every morning I was back on campus taking my classes, tending to my teaching duties." The book's release coincides with the release of Bad Religion's 15th studio album. ■ *Publicist at HarperCollins is Greg Kubie at 212-207-7760 and Greg.Kubie@harpercollins.com. Olson can be reached at solson@comcast.net and 202-536-7220.*

The Shape of Inner Space **by Sching-Tung Yau and Steve Nadis (NASW) published by Basic Books**

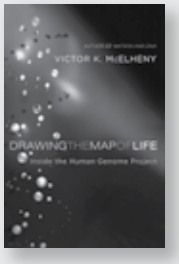
Broadly speaking, this book is about understanding the universe through geometry—an approach that was embraced by the ancient Greek mathematicians, as well as by Albert Einstein in crafting his general theory of relativity. More specifically, this is the story of how an esoteric bit of geometry found its way into the center of string theory, where it now offers a startling new picture of the universe, which, if true, would be even more startling. In 1976, the Chinese-born geometer Shing-Tung Yau (now at Harvard) proved the existence of strange, higher-dimensional spaces, which now go by the name of "Calabi-Yau." String theorists, meanwhile, had posited that the universe has six "extra" dimensions, the shape of which dictates pretty much everything—all the particles and all the interactions between them. But what is that shape? Eight years after Yau's proof, physicists realized that Calabi-Yau spaces might meet all their requirements. These geometrical spaces, in other words, might provide "the shape of inner space." The book describes the magical interactions between mathematicians and physicists as mathematics has given rise to new physics, which in turn has given rise to new mathematics. NASW member Steve Nadis was put in touch with his coauthor, Yau, by a Chinese-American physicist whom Nadis had profiled in *Astronomy* magazine. ■ *Nadis can be reached at 617-876-7143 and stevenadis@comcast.net. The publicist for the book is Cassie Nelson at 212-340-8132 and Cassie.Nelson@perseusbooks.com.*

Sleights of Mind: What the Neuroscience of Magic Reveals About Our Everyday Deceptions **by Stephen L. Macknik and Susana Martinez-Conde with Sandra Blakeslee (NASW) published by Henry Holt & Co.**



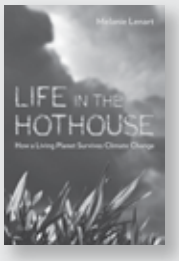
Macknik and Martinez-Conde are the founders of a new discipline, neuromagic. They have convinced some of the world's greatest magicians to reveal their techniques for tricking the brain. They traveled the world to find out how magic and its ancient principles can now be explained using the latest discoveries of cognitive neuroscience. Macknik is the director of the laboratory of behavioral neurophysiology at the Barrow Neurological Institute (BNI) in Phoenix, Ariz. and Martinez-Conde is director of the laboratory of visual neuroscience at BNI. Blakeslee, *New York Times* science correspondent and freelance, magically made the science consumer-friendly. The book reveals the secrets behind magic tricks that demonstrate how your brain works not just watching a magic show but in everyday situations. For instance, the book points out, if you've found yourself paying for an expensive item you'd sworn you'd never buy, the salesperson was probably a master at creating the "illusion of choice," a core technique of magic. This book unveils the key connections between magic and the mind. ■ *Macknik can be reached at 602-406-8091 and macknik@neuralcorrelate.com; Martinez-Conde at 602-406-3483 and smart@neuralcorrelate.com; and Blakeslee at 505-982-5975 and sblakeslee@mindspring.com. The PR for the book is Maggie Sivon at 646-307-5240 and Maggie.sivon@hholt.com.*

Drawing the Map of Life: Inside the Human Genome Project **by Victor McElheny (NASW) published by Basic Books**



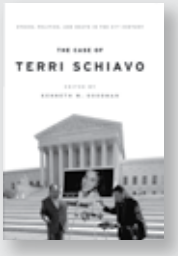
This is the story of the Human Genome Project from its origins, through the race to order the three billion subunits of DNA, to the surprises emerging as scientists seek to exploit the molecule of heredity. Based on years of original interviews and reporting in the inner circles of biological science, *Drawing the Map of Life* is the first account to deal in depth with the intellectual roots of the project, the motivations that drove it, and the hype that often masked genuine triumphs. Author Victor McElheny, founder of the Knight Science Fellowship and currently a visiting scholar at MIT, gives insightful profiles of key people, such as David Botstein, Eric Lander, Francis Collins, James Watson, Michael Hunkapiller, and Craig Venter. McElheny also shows that the Human Genome Project is an example of how new techniques (such as restriction enzymes and sequencing methods) often arrive first, shaping the questions scientists then ask. ■ *McElheny can be reached at 617-497-7428 and mcelheny@mit.edu.*

Life in the Hothouse: How a Living Planet Survives Climate Change **by Melanie Lenart (NASW) published by the University of Arizona Press**



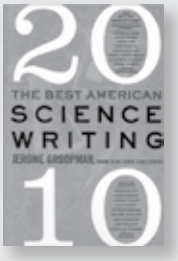
Climate skeptics challenge the link between rising carbon dioxide levels and temperature. Yet, a look back in deep time shows temperature and carbon dioxide rising and falling in synch in a long-term relationship that's outlasted many a mountain, according to Lenart. An award-winning journalist and science writer who holds a Ph.D. in natural resources and global change, Lenart synthesizes research about the past 100 million years to consider how our planet responds to different climates, past and present. Do stronger hurricanes, rising seas, and bigger floods imply a planet taking revenge for human-caused greenhouse gas heating? No, Lenart argues, they merely demonstrate survival techniques of a living system. "Much as humans produce sweat to cool off, the Earth produces hurricanes, floods, and forests in its own temperature-balancing effort," she writes. Lenart bases this interpretation on the concept of Gaia theory, but does that mean humans can leave it to the planet to take care of the extra heat-trapping greenhouse gases filling the air? "No," she states emphatically. "The planet can survive with ice-free poles, higher sea levels, and intense hurricanes that would potentially be off the charts by today's standards. Clearly, under such conditions, society would face many challenges." ■ *Lenart can be reached at mlenart@email.arizona.edu. The press representative is Holly Schaffer at 520-621-3920 and holly@uapress.arizona.edu.*

***The Case of Terri Schiavo: Ethics, Politics, and Death in the 21st Century* by Kenneth Goodman, Ph.D. (NASW) published by Oxford University Press**



Kenneth Goodman, director of the University of Miami Bioethics Program, has edited the first set of scholarly—i.e., not by family members or partisan—analyses on the case of Terri Schiavo, the young woman who spent 15 years in a persistent vegetative state and whose case emerged as a watershed in debates over end-of-life care. While many observers had thought the right to refuse medical treatment was well established, this case split a family, divided a nation, and confounded physicians, legislators, and many of the people they treated or represented. In renewing debates over the importance of advance directives, the appropriate role of artificial hydration and nutrition, and the responsibilities of family members, the case also became one of history's most extensively litigated health care disputes. *The Case of Terri Schiavo* assembles a team of first-hand participants and content experts to provide thoughtful and nuanced analyses. In addition to a comprehensive overview, the book includes contributions by Schiavo's guardian ad litem, a neurologist, and lawyer who participated in the case, and scholars who examine issues related to litigation, faith, gender, and disability. ■ *Goodman can be reached at kgoodman@miami.edu. John Hercel, marketing department at Oxford University Press, can be reached at john.hercel@oup.com.*

***The Best American Science Writing 2010* edited by Jerome Groopman published by Ecco/Harper**



The latest edition of Ecco's popular annual series, *The Best American Science Writing 2010* offers a collection of the year's most relevant and compelling science writing. This year's guest editor, *New York Times* bestselling author and *New Yorker* staff writer, Jerome Groopman has brought together a wide variety of works, providing a comprehensive overview of the most diverse and stimulating science writing of the past year. NASW members whose work is included in the anthology: Jennifer Couzin-Frankel "Friendship as a Health Factor" (published in *Science*); and David Dobbs "The Science of Success" (published in *The Atlantic*).

NOTE: Ecco/Harper seeks submissions for *The Best American Science Writing 2011*. Send work, published in 2010, electronically to series editor Jesse Cohen at jesseicohen@netscape.net. Include a brief cover letter. Deadline: Dec. 31, 2010.

***Encyclopedia of Science and Technology Communication* edited by Susanna Hornig Priest published by SAGE Publications, Inc.**

Science communicators need to understand more than how to interpret scientific facts and conclusions; they need to understand basic elements of the politics, sociology, and philosophy of science, as well as relevant media and communication theory, principles of risk communication, new trends, and how to evaluate the effectiveness of science communication programs, to mention just a few of the major challenges. *The Encyclopedia of Science and Technology Communication* provides a comprehensive introduction to students, professionals, and scholars. The two-volume set (approximately 1,100 pages) contains more than 300 entries with bibliographies and reference for further reading. NASW contributors include: Linda Billings, Rick Borchelt, Estrella Burgos, James Cornell, Tinsley Davis, Rick Borchelt, Sharon Dunwoody, Sharon Friedman, Lynne Friedmann, Barbara Gastel, Bruce Lewenstein, Robert Logan, Jon Miller, Gail Porter, Cristine Russell, and Bud Ward. Available in both hardcopy and electronic formats. ■ *To order, or for more information, visit http://bit.ly/9mtE0J.*

***Science and the Media* edited by Donald Kennedy and Geneva Overholser published by the American Academy of Arts & Sciences**

The essays in this volume discuss the roles of scientists, journalists, and public information officers in communicating about science and technology. The authors look at the role the media play in boosting Americans' scientific literacy and at how the new digital media are changing the coverage (and consumption) of science news. They discuss how inadequate press coverage combined with poor communication by scientists can lead to disastrous public policy decisions. The collection is the result of a series of workshops organized by the American Academy and supported by the Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands, which considered ways to enrich Americans' engagement with science and technology. Contributors include NASW members Rick Borchelt, Lynne Friedmann, Earle Holland, Jon D. Miller, and Cristine Russell. ■ *The volume is available as a free PDF download (http://bit.ly/dIUJQe) or can be ordered from the American Academy (http://bit.ly/a4joak).*

Revised Article VIII For Membership Vote

Below is a revised version of Article VIII of the NASW Constitution, the article that deals with the organization's procedures for suspending or terminating membership.

Revision of Article VIII was advised last year by an attorney who reviewed the NASW constitution for compliance with state laws for nonprofit 501(c)6 corporations. Amendments to other parts of the constitution were approved by the NASW membership in February, but the amendment to Article VIII was rejected. Instead, members directed that an ad hoc committee be established to develop a new version to be voted on this November.

Mariette DiChristina, the president, and Tinsley Davis, executive director, asked John Gever, an NASW member, and Dan Ferber, a board member, to serve as co-chairs of an ad hoc committee to redraft Article VIII. Norman Bauman, Melissa Blouin, Jennie Dusheck, David Levine, and David Lawrence volunteered to serve on the ad hoc committee.

After several months and another attorney review, they have produced the following for your consideration and vote.

This version of Article VIII makes two key policy changes:

- A case would be heard by either the board or an ad hoc committee of non-board members. In most cases, the accused chooses who hears his or her case. (According to the old constitution, cases go directly to the general membership at the annual meeting. According to the version of Article VIII rejected in February, a case would be heard by the NASW board.)
- If the charges against the accused are upheld, he or she can appeal to the membership. If the accused is exonerated, the verdict is final.

NASW appreciates the thoughtfulness and care of everyone who participated in developing this amendment, including those who contributed suggestions and comments on the draft posted online earlier this summer. ■

Deadline for voting by Proxy: Nov. 5

Proposed Update to the Constitution and Bylaws of the National Association of Science Writers, Inc.

ARTICLE VIII

Section 1. NOTICE OF TERMINATION OF MEMBERS FOR NONPAYMENT OF DUES. Any member who remains in arrears regarding payment of dues for 12 months shall be given 30 days' notice that if dues are not paid at the end of the 30-day period, his or her membership shall be terminated. In each case, the executive director shall give the delinquent member notice by any method reasonably calculated to provide actual notice and by first-class mail or overnight delivery by a nationally recognized carrier to the member's last address as shown on the corporation's records.

Section 2. TERMINATION OF MEMBERS. A membership shall terminate on occurrence of any of the following events: (i) resignation of the member; (ii) expiration of the period of membership, unless the membership is renewed on the renewal terms fixed by the Board; (iii) the member's failure to pay dues, fees, or assessments as set by the Board within the 30-day notice period as described in Section 1 (but such a terminated member may re-apply for membership after satisfying all payments in arrears); or (iv) conduct substantially prejudicial to the purposes and interests of the Association, as determined under Section 4 of Article VIII of these bylaws.

Section 3. SUSPENSION OF MEMBERS. A member may be suspended or have certain privileges of membership revoked for a limited time for conduct substantially prejudicial to the purposes and interests of the Association, as determined under Section 4 of Article VIII of these bylaws.

Section 4. PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSION OR TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP. Should the president, or any three members, find the conduct of a member to be substantially prejudicial to the best interests of the Association, they shall deliver a signed, written complaint to the Executive Director or to any officer or Board member.

Within two working days of the Association's receipt of a complaint, the accused member shall be notified of the charges. Notice shall be given by any method reasonably calculated to provide actual notice and by first-class mail or overnight delivery by a nationally-recognized carrier to the member's last address as shown on the corporation's records. Within 20 calendar days of this notification, the executive director or, if the executive director is absent or is the object of the complaint, an officer or director designated by the president, shall arrange for the complaint to be heard by one of the following bodies: (i) when the accused member is an officer, board member, or employee of the organization, the accused member will have the charges heard by an ad hoc committee of seven members, randomly selected from the membership until seven members are found who are willing and able to serve on such a committee (the "Ad Hoc Committee"); or (ii) when the accused member does not hold office in the Association, that member may choose to have the charges heard by the Board or by an Ad Hoc Committee.

The Board or Ad Hoc Committee hearing the charges will promptly set a hearing date. The accused member shall be provided with all evidence to be presented to the Board or Ad Hoc Committee at least ten calendar days before the hearing on the complaint and shall have full opportunity to present rebutting or exculpatory evidence and argument. The Board or Ad Hoc Committee may vote by a simple majority to grant a 30-day extension for the accused member to prepare his or her defense if the member cites a need for additional time. The Board or Ad Hoc Committee may grant, in its discretion, additional 30-day extensions at the member's request.

A vote of at least five members of the Ad Hoc Committee, or at least two-thirds of the members of the Board participating in the hearing, shall be necessary to sustain the complaint. If the complaint is sustained, the Board or Ad Hoc Committee shall determine the sanctions to be imposed, which may include expulsion or suspension. The Board or Ad Hoc Committee will render a written decision on the charges after the hearing and will notify the accused member of the decision by first class mail or overnight delivery by a nationally recognized carrier. No individual shall participate in processing or reviewing a complaint if he or she is a complainant or the accused member, or if he or she has a conflict of interest involving complainants or the accused member.

A member who wishes to appeal a judgment, must file an appeal within 21 days of being notified of the judgment. The appeal will be heard and voted on by the general membership at the next annual meeting, provided this meeting occurs at least 30 calendar days after the appeal is filed. In the event that the appeal is filed within 30 days of the next annual meeting, the appeal hearing shall be heard at the following annual meeting. Any and all disciplinary action against the accused shall be suspended pending outcome of the appeal. Prior to the appeal hearing, all pertinent information determined by the Board to be pertinent and all evidence provided by the accused at the initial hearing will be made available to the entire membership in secure electronic format. The vote of the membership will be recorded by paper ballot for those members attending the meeting, and by proxy for those members not present. A vote of at least two-thirds of members voting shall be required to sustain the Board's or Ad Hoc committee's judgment.

■ ■ ■

Exercise your membership right to

Vote

Cast your vote for or against the revised version of Amendment VIII of the NASW Constitution:

In person, at a Special Meeting of the National Association of Science Writers, Inc. on:

Saturday, Nov. 6, 2010
8:00 AM in the Ballroom
Omni New Haven Hotel at Yale
155 Temple Street
New Haven, Connecticut

OR

Issue your proxy (for or against) quickly and securely online by Nov. 5, 2010:

www.nasw.org/elections_bylaws

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

President's Letter

THIS IS MY LAST COLUMN AS PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCIENCE WRITERS. AS I THOUGHT ABOUT THE END OF MY TENURE RECENTLY, IT HIT ME: ONE OF THE MOST ENDURING AND REWARDING RELATIONSHIPS OF MY LIFE HAS BEEN WITH AN ORGANIZATION.

More than 15 years ago, when I decided I wanted to volunteer for NASW, I took the excellent advice of Diane McGurgan, then the executive director: "Start with something that you like." I found a lot to like.

I started worked on the education committee, serving as a mentor and later co-chairing with Kelli Whitlock Burton. I lost elections for a board seat twice before finally getting lucky the third time. As secretary, I later inaugurated regular communications from the board to members. I co-chaired (again with Kelli) the Internet committee when we redesigned the website nearly half a decade ago. I took my turn heading the workshops committee for two years.

As president, working closely with Executive Director Tinsley Davis, the board and I focused on professionalizing the organization, including: revamping the bylaws for the first time in 50 years, refining the annual ScienceWriters meeting co-hosted with the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing, revamping our accounting processes and changing the fiscal year; establishing policies for mandated areas; building in some diversity outreach; and redesigning the website (again).

With the visionary work of former NASW President Deborah Blum, our twinning relationship with the Arab Science Journalists Association blossomed, so that we are collaborating together to create the seventh World Congress of Science Journalists, in June 2011, in Cairo.

Knowing NASW as well as I do, I think, gives me both unique insights as well an obligation to say a few things.

First, and foremost thank you, thank you, thank you all you NASW officers, board members, and many volunteers, past and present, with whom I've had the privilege to work on various projects. You inspired and challenged me, and I will always be grateful.

Now, let's talk about the future. As I mentioned, the board has focused a lot on infrastructure in the past two years. Next, it's up to the new board, led by the amazing Nancy Shute as the incoming president, and the members to see where you want to take it from here. As NASW joyously celebrates its 75th anniversary, we remember that the world of science writing in general is not always cheery. Our industry is undergoing rapid change, and all of us are scrambling in response. At the same time, the organization has rapidly expanded the number of member services and resources recently, from the Words' Worth database to the many travel and career-development fellowships that we administrate.

Our administrative needs as an organization have expanded, but the human resources are unchanged: one full-time executive director and a few part-time contractors for *ScienceWriters*, the cybrarian, and other essentials. At the same time, many members are working harder than ever to make their way in the changing business environment, and they have less time than ever to share. Relying solely on volunteer power leaves the organization stretched to our limits.

So we should consider a few questions: First, what do we want NASW to do? Do we want it to continue to maintain and expand member services and benefits? If so, do we want to pay more dues or perhaps even change our incorporation status to allow us to fundraise and afford to hire additional staff?

And who is NASW for? We say it is for "science writers" and we define that broadly: members are journalists, public information officers, educators, museum-exhibition writers—and, increasingly, people who combine several of those roles at once. We even let in people, like me, who hold the odious position of "editor." Increasingly, the organization's composition has shifted, too, from staff writers at brand-name outlets to writing entrepreneurs who run their own businesses. Who gets what kinds of support—and how much?

You inspired and challenged me, and I will always be grateful.

Nancy is kicking things off in the wisest way possible: by devoting at least part of the new board's first meeting to strategic planning. I know she and the new board will really need your feedback and support—that is, all of you who are members—as your organization plans its next steps.

Frankly, I expect great things to happen under her watch. And, please remember, it is also yours. ■

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

Cybrarian
Russell Clemings
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Cyberbeat

We've talked several times

ALREADY ABOUT WHAT'S COMING IN THE NEWLY REDESIGNED NASW WEBSITE, AND WITH ANY LUCK (ALWAYS AN IFFY PROPOSITION) YOU'LL BE ABLE TO SEE THE RESULTS YOURSELF BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS. BUT IF THERE'S ONE THING WE REALLY WANT YOU TO NOTICE, IT'S THAT WE'RE TRYING TO MAKE IT EASY FOR ANY MEMBER TO CONTRIBUTE CONTENT TO THE SITE.

Here's how it will work: Once you've logged in with your NASW member username and password, you'll see links near the top of the screen to a section called "My NASW."

Follow that link and you'll find several places where you can create science-related content—from short blog posts to longer articles—and share it with others. We plan to scan that content daily and promote the best of it to the NASW.org front page, but in any case it will always be visible on your own page. In addition, as you read content created by other members, you can mark those writers as "favorites," which means their work will be displayed on a separate page within your My NASW section.

We hope these new features will gradually turn NASW.org into a destination for science news and information, harnessing its members' energy for the greater good. Don't be afraid to experiment; it will be what our members make of it.

Now to the lists.

NASW-TALK

The big blog blowup dominated NASW-talk for a few days in July. Silver Spring, Md., health journalist Mary Knudson asked the NASW board whether it would suggest that *Seed* magazine's ScienceBlogs reconsider adding a PepsiCo blog to its stable, which already included several well-known NASW members.

"This controversy is raging on Twitter, and Paul Raeburn has written a post and David Dobbs and Rebecca Skloot have pulled their blogs off ScienceBlogs in

Dispatches from the Director

Tinsley Davis
Executive Director
DIRECTOR@NASW.ORG

A Call for Volunteers

At this year's annual meeting, in addition to saying hearty thanks to our outgoing President Mariette DiChristina and those board members cycling off, we will welcome six new board members for their first two-year term. The four officers and 11 board members-at-large are a strong leadership foundation for the organization, helping drive important programming like the Science in Society awards and taking care of necessary, though sometimes thankless, governance tasks.

Yet, no matter how talented and passionate these volunteer board members are, we need the energy and input of many more volunteers to address issues and maintain and develop programs that are representative of the large membership. Some of you are already active on a committee or have volunteered to help out with ad-hoc groups needed for specific issues like the redrafting of Article VIII. Still others have volunteered time and creative energy to organize workshop sessions or even local events.

If you're not already involved and you want to be, there are a number of standing committees. If your particular science-writing interest isn't represented by a committee or volunteer opportunity, talk to your board about spearheading a new initiative or group. We need your ideas as much as we need your willingness to volunteer to represent the interests of this diverse membership.

> ...we need the energy and input of many more volunteers...

To get you started thinking, NASW's current committees are listed below. For descriptions, the chair's contact information and any updates, visit the NASW website.

Annual meeting
Awards
Education
Finance and audit
Freelance
Grievance
Information access
Internet
Membership
Nominating

protest of the Pepsi decision," Knudson wrote. "Advertisers whose soft drinks are a national health problem should not share blogging space with legitimate science journalists."

The board ultimately chose not to get involved. But the list discussion continued as its members considered all possible variations of "What was Seed [Media Group] thinking?"

University of North Carolina-Charlotte science writer James Hathaway said he thought the whole affair was "kind of funny. 'Hey, I've got an idea—let's counter the growing public drama over the fact that we sell bottles and cans of bad nutritional garbage by buying our own nutrition blog amid many of the people who write critical things about us. That will work!' What did the folks at PepsiCo think was going to happen? Has anyone seen the episode of Mad Men where Don Draper points out to the tobacco company that publishing phony health information does more harm than good because the public is not going to be fooled? I guess some lessons are never learned."

State College, Pa., freelancer Steve Miller said he thought the reaction to PepsiCo's blog was a little premature.

"I wonder if anyone has actually read a blog from Pepsi on the ScienceBlogs site? If so, where can I find anything other than the intro blog that merely says 'We are here and we are planning to have a blog written by notable food scientists who work for Pepsi?' If not, why the screaming panic as we run from the Blob before finding out what they are writing?"

White Salmon, Wash., freelancer Dawn Stover tried to explain:

"My understanding is that the bloggers weren't necessarily objecting to PepsiCo having a blog; they were mainly concerned about these issues: 1) the 'Food Frontiers' blog was not identified as a PepsiCo-created blog; 2) Seed [Media] did not acknowledge that it was a 'sponsored' blog (i.e. getting paid to give PepsiCo this platform); and 3) the site originally claimed that the PepsiCo blog was 'overseen by ScienceBlogs editors,' which was not true.

"Mixing an industry-sponsored blog in with blogs by independent science writers, and failing to identify it as such," she said, "gives the PepsiCo 'nutrition' blog a credibility it has not earned, and at the expense of independent writers who have worked hard to build a following."

By the second day of debate, Seed Media had thrown in the towel and removed the PepsiCo blog from its site, but many of its star science bloggers had already jumped ship. One of them, David Dobbs, explained his decision.

"This was not about Pepsi, per se. It was about SciBlogs selling a company an editorial spot. I'm a bit astonished to see how easily this point has been lost."

Read the entire conversation by searching the July 2010 NASW-talk archives for the subjects, "ScienceBlogs" and "Seed's integrity."
(See page 1 for more on this topic.)

NASW-FREELANCE

Arcata, Calif., freelancer Sharon Levy asked the NASW-freelance list for help in early July with a problem that may be faced by other authors:

"I'm now nearly done with my book, and it's time to write up acknowledgments. I seem to have a real case of writer's block re this seemingly easy part of the book.

"I've gotten all kinds of weird advice about it too. One friend thinks I should acknowledge my sister, who I loved dearly but who died years before I started working on the book. Another says I should refuse to do any acknowledgments on the theory that I'll leave someone out and thereby offend them."

Auburndale, Mass., freelancer Jeff Hecht was the first of many to offer general tips:

"Acknowledgments should thank the people who helped you, in whatever way. A dedication is the place to mention your sister or someone who didn't actually help in the book."

Others, such as Orleans, Mass., freelancer Barbara Ravage, were more specific:

"Don't forget your agent and your editor. I think it's expected, and it also provides info to writers in search of agents and editors. Include anyone who provided practical or moral/emotional support as well as inspiration. (I acknowledged Berton Roueche, whose work made me want to be a medical writer when I grew up. Some may consider that pretentious.)"

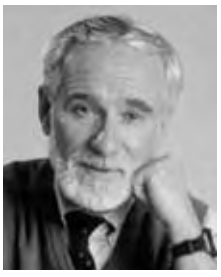
But repaying debts isn't the only purpose of acknowledgments, she concluded. "I think the acks serve not only to thank people but also to give a window into the author's experience writing the book. After I've finished reading something I enjoyed, I kind of like that peek behind the curtain."

New York freelancer Maia Szalavitz urged an inclusive approach when deciding who gets mentioned:

"You can't hurt someone's feelings by putting them in (unless we're talking very strange situations), but you can certainly do serious damage by leaving them out. I accidentally left an editor out and another editor pointed it out in galleys. The person had been very hurt, and the slight was entirely unintentional. You do that often enough and you might never know why you didn't get a new book deal."

Minneapolis writer Maryn McKenna "thanked everyone who helped me: the 200 or so interviewees, but also the many others who helped negotiate interviews, gave me names, pointed me in fruitful directions, got me into conferences, etc. Also, anyone who put me up or fed me. Also, agent, editor, publicist, their assistants, and the EIC and publisher of the house. Also, magazine editors who published the two stories that led to the book contract. The acks in *Superbug* run to six pages, but I figure people who extend goodwill deserve to be recognized for it. I consider it karma insurance."

Read the entire conversation by searching the July 2010 NASW-freelance archives for the subject, "acknowledgements." And yes, it's misspelled, at least for people on this side of the Atlantic. It's been corrected in the excerpts for this column. ■



James Cornell
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News from Afar

Who woulda thunk it? Scientists and journalists actually agreeing on things. And not only liking each other, but even wanting to hang together.

This unlikely relationship manifested itself at the 2010 version of the Euroscience Open Forum (ESOF) due to an unusual set of circumstances.

The Fourth ESOF, Europe's biennial equivalent of the AAAS's annual meeting, was held in Turin, Italy, July 2-8, and attracted some 4,000 participants, among them researchers, politicians, policy wonks, and an estimated 400 media representatives.

A goodly number of those media reps—some 50—came there under the auspices of the Robert Bosch Foundation of Stuttgart, Germany.

As it has done at previous ESOF events, the foundation provided travel fellowships to journalists who wanted to cover the meeting. Although only five Americans took up the offer this time (including NASW members Steve Ashley and Renee Twombly), there were nearly two dozen German journalists, plus about a dozen each from China and India. In addition, the foundation hosted some 50 young researchers from around the world, who first went to the annual Nobel Laureate Meeting, in Lindau, Germany.

Responsibility for shepherding this eclectic herd of researchers and reporters fell to me and Holger Wormer, a German science journalist turned professor at Dortmund University, who added 10 of his own undergraduate students to the mix.

Our main task was to provide the fellows, none of whom had attended an ESOF meeting previously, with guidance to the daily mélange of panels, seminars, plenary lectures, press briefings and, of course, social events. And we had only a half-hour early each morning to do so.

An impossible task, I felt. Fortunately, Holger was more optimistic—and imaginative. He suggested that, instead of us telling them what we thought was interesting, we'd ask three researchers and three writers each to give short (two-minute "radio") reports on what would be most interesting to them.

Remarkably, there was almost perfect agreement between the disparate groups. What was interesting to scientists most often was what seemed most newsworthy to reporters. More extraordinary, when combined, the two sets of daily highlights usually included all of those that Holger and I—their supposed mentors—had chosen independently.

Even more surprises came in the final "debriefing session" when the fellows had an opportunity to comment candidly on what was right—and wrong—with this particular ESOF meeting.

Again, both groups were in close agreement on the meeting's shortcomings—from the lack of any really new results to the inconvenience of the venue (the Turin Convention Center is in the former Fiat plant, so the press center, meeting rooms, and exhibits area were strung out along the long, seemingly endless, path of the former assembly line) to the predominance of science policy in the program. Oddly, the researchers seemed much more tolerant of this feature than did the reporters.

But the two groups were equally in agreement about one very positive aspect of the meeting—the exchanges between them. In fact, because separate social schedules had been planned before the meeting began, scientists and writers alike wished that there had been more opportunities for interaction similar to our short daily press briefings.

Perhaps this unexpected rapport had something to do with the openness of youth—most of the fellows, researchers and reporters, were about the same age. They were also such a diverse national and ethnic mix that no one cultural group dominated. All were strangers in a strange land, bonded briefly by a common interest, in this case, science.

Whatever the chemistry, it worked, and suggests that the gap between science and journalism isn't as broad as often thought.

Of course, much of this cross-discipline congeniality may be due to the nature of the ESOF meeting itself. Although originally intended as a showcase for European research and the catalyst for a coordinated S&T program capable of competing with China and the United States, ESOF has slowly evolved into a largely social event, a sort of giant trade fair, celebrating science rather than advancing it.

Indeed, the scientific symposia are now only one part of a multi-track program that includes large doses of career counseling for young academics and industrial/commercial inducements to increase technology transfer.

Even more than at its American counterpart and model, the ESOF science sessions and lectures tend to be reflective overviews and reviews. Little new science is presented. Reporters and researchers alike are entertained, but seldom excited. That makes for an oddly relaxing atmosphere: Once one realizes that there is no news to cover, there is really no need to break one's neck looking for it.

Only one result—new microwave map of the universe produced by the European Space Agency's Planck satellite—made international news. But because ESOF had little to do with the discovery other than announcing it, the Turin dateline went generally unnoted.

At least some reporters attended that briefing. Usually, press conferences had more speakers at the podium than reporters in the room. This was especially true at the coma-inducing discussions of long-range plans and policies by EU officials in blue suits, events very much like the infamous EU press breakfasts at the AAAS—only without the eggs.

(To its credit, when the ESOF media center handed out awards for "best conference coverage," one honored an Indian journalist's funny commentary on just how dull and boring

Upcoming Meetings

Dec. 6-10, 2010 • ***11th International Conference on the Public Communication of Science and Technology (PCST2010)***, New Delhi, India. www.pcst-2010.org

June 27-29, 2011 • ***7th World Conference of Science Journalists***, Cairo, Egypt. www.wcsj2011.org

Sept. 4-8, 2011 • ***6th Science Centre World Congress***, Cape Town, South Africa. www.6scwc.org

May 7-10, 2012 • ***Planet Under Pressure: New Knowledge, New Solutions***, London, United Kingdom. http://www.igbp.net/page.php?pid=531

July 12-16, 2012 • ***5th Euroscience Open Forum (ESOF2012)***, Dublin, Ireland. www.esof2012.org

For an extensive list of international conferences, particularly those related to the research in and about the developing world, visit **http://www.scidev.net/en/events**.

sessions could be.)

The liveliest and perhaps most successful component of ESOF may be its "Science in the City" outreach efforts. Lectures, demonstrations, and exhibits were mounted across Turin, in museums and galleries and university halls, but also in many city squares and parks. All were open to the public, most were free, and many were bilingual.

Most impressive was the broad embrace of the concept by the people of Turin. Flyers and posters and schedules were everywhere, in cafes and restaurants and news shops, and large enthusiastic crowds gathered in the main plaza to watch scientific talks and demonstrations projected on a giant television screen.

One of the best attended shows was "Green Porn," featuring Isabella Rossellini's take on animal sexuality (**www.sundancechannel.com/greenporno/**). It may have also helped that the same screens were used for public free viewing of World Cup matches.

The next ESOF will be held in Dublin in July 2012. The organizers hope it can restart that country's sputtering S&T sector. With some improvement in program content, more attention to topical research results, and a little Irish luck, the fifth ESOF might recapture its original goals.

And, given liberal infusions of Guinness and Jameson's, researchers and reporters may find they really do like each other. Or, as Rick Blaine tells Captain Renault at the end of "Casablanca," this could be the beginning of a beautiful friendship. ■

Genevive Bjorn
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The Free Lance

What is the future of freelancing?

WRITERS WHO HAVE TAKEN THE BUYOUT AT FOLDING NEWSPAPERS OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS HAVE TURNED TO FREELANCE JOURNALISM AS A WAY TO KEEP WORKING. WHILE OTHER FREELANCES LIKE ME, WHO'VE BEEN AT IT FOR YEARS, SEE THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE SHIFTING RAPIDLY AND WANT TO STAY COMPETITIVE. EITHER WAY, IT'S DAUNTING TO GROW A FREELANCE BUSINESS WHILE IMPROVING AS A WRITER IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING MARKETPLACE. FOR TWO DAYS IN JUNE, 125 FREELANCE JOURNALISTS AND 50 EDITORS GATHERED ON THE STANFORD UNIVERSITY CAMPUS IN PALO ALTO, CALIF., TO DISCUSS OUR COLLECTIVE FUTURE AND, PERHAPS, CATCH A GLIMPSE OF IT.

"The Future of Freelancing: Redefining Journalism, Reinventing Yourself," sponsored by the American Society of Journalists and Authors (ASJA), was the first such gathering on the West Coast exclusively for freelance journalists. ASJA holds an annual conference in New York with similar aims, but not exclusive for freelances. Christine Larson, a freelance writer based in Sacramento, Calif., recognized the need for such a gathering back in 2008 and organized the conference for her John S. Knight Fellowship project. She was spot on: "The Future of Freelancing" sold out on the first day of registration.

What made this conference memorable was the quality of both the speakers and the participants. Panelists presented a wide range of views: from editors at national magazines to literary agents to business experts and award-winning writers. Audience members were midcareer journalists with impressive bios; any one of them could have led sessions themselves.

"I met writers from as far away as Norway and Kenya. In addition, the panels and speakers I heard were uniformly strong with top editors and writers talking about the ins and outs (and ups and downs) of freelancing," said attendee John Moir, a freelance writer based in Santa Cruz, Calif.

FACE TIME AND A GREAT IDEA

When I read the e-mail advertising the conference, what sparked my interest was the opportunity to meet one-on-one with an editor or agent. And it's not everyday that a freelance writer gets the chance to speak face-to-face about her work with an editor at the likes of *Wired*, *The New Yorker*, or the *Washington Post*. Quick online action on my part landed one of 42 coveted slots. I met with Mark Robinson, assigning features editor of *Wired*. [For those not fortunate enough to secure a one-on-one session, "sidebar" meetings were arranged in which three groups of 10 writers met with an editor or agent.]

During my one-on-one session with Robinson, I asked what he needs most now and in the future from freelance writers. "Great ideas," he replied. "Writers with great ideas are the lifeblood of editors."

So, what exactly is the definition of a great idea? Not surprisingly, it looks different at each media outlet. On Day 2, there was a panel discussion devoted to the future of magazines, and great ideas was a major theme strummed time and again as a key to our collective future success.

At *Wired*, according to Robinson, a great idea must be specific, involve a personality, address bigger themes, contain technical layers and deliver a conceptual scoop. An organically good idea that seems "wired" will naturally have all of those attributes, explains Robinson.

Other panelists at the magazine session elaborated on how they define a great idea. Luke Mitchell, editor at *Popular Science*, explained that a great idea must appeal to a broad general audience. By comparison, Sydney Trent of the *Washington Post Magazine*, emphasized that a great idea must contain a regional angle. Daniel Zalewski, features editor at the *New Yorker* and explained a great idea shares some of those attributes, but for a great idea to become an assigned story, the author must write compelling narrative and masterfully use literacy devices. And the writer must prove through strong clips that he or she can deliver. A high bar, indeed.

The fact remains that editors need writers now and in the future. So, writers hold a lot of power if they have a good idea, explains Robinson. It's easy for freelance writers to forget that, especially when they experience a lot of rejection or a changing marketplace.

GENEVIVE BJORN IS A FREELANCE WRITER BASED IN SAN DIEGO, CALIF., AND BLOGS ABOUT THE SENSE OF SMELL AT THEDAILYSMELL.COM.

VENTING AND BRAINSTORMING

The conference created a supportive environment where you could turn to any neighbor and he or she could relate to the ups and downs of the work. No one attending worked for a regular paycheck as staff writer or across the ethical divide in better-paying public relations. Apart from a few dozen editors with salaries, the group comprised freelances working in the trenches of an era marked by disruptive, non- or low-paying media and a protracted recession. There was plenty to vent about: layoffs, anemic advances, rate stagnation, and plum long-form assignments shriveling to prunes. None of these issues were truly resolved at this conference. But we heaved a collective sigh to be able to discuss them candidly.

Still, we are committed and passionate lot determined to find opportunity, reflected accordingly in the conference theme "redefining journalism, reinventing yourself." So in the midst of venting, I also heard attendees asking others what's working for them now and what their goals are. Perhaps more telling, attendees participated informally in real-time, peer-to-peer mentoring listening and suggesting ways others could reach their goals.

For example, one colleague I met on Day 2 wrote a successful book as well as a long list of articles. He wants to write a second book, but has been spinning around trying to find a suitable topic. After lunch we brainstormed ideas and new approaches. Then he returned the favor. I'd been thinking about starting a new blog, but aspects of the topic could easily veer into the yawn zone. He helped me think through the more humorous and entertaining angles. By helping each other problem solve, we added momentum to our individual paths forward.

Basic Tools of Multimedia

Change brings both pain and opportunity, and ours is a changing industry. So, here are the opportunities for freelance writers to grow their careers? Here's a run down of sectors that hold the most promise for growth as discussed at the "Future of Freelancing" conference in Palo Alto, Calif., from June 18-19, 2010.

- eBooks—such as those available on the Kindle, Nook and iPad
- Magazines—particularly emerging electronic formats behind pay walls that require understanding of multimedia elements
- Online—specifically multimedia enhancements to written articles, as well as digital storytelling

What basic tools do freelance writers need in order to take advantage of the growth trend toward multimedia?

- Audio recorder
- Microphone
- Headphones
- Sounds editing software, such as the universal freeware, Audacity, or on Macs, GarageBand
- More advanced users should also consider a video recorder that shoots still images as well as video editing software, such as Soundslides or Final Cut Express.

Links:

- Future of Freelance conference homepage—**http://freelance.stanford.edu/**
- Twitter—#FFRL, @LarsonWrites

NEW TOOLS AND NEW TRADE

Breakout sessions filled the conference schedule between panel discussions. The topics ranged from the garden variety "Google for freelancers," to the tantalizing "grants and fellowships," to the buzzing "multimedia for writers." It was in these smaller sessions that experts in those areas presented specific tools and tips. Larson's motivation behind these sessions was the idea that new tools create new opportunities.

The session that held the most promise of new work was multimedia for writers. Richard Koci Hernandez presented an easy-to-follow roundup of "must have" tools for producing multimedia stories and some basics on how to use them. His goal was to show us how easy it is to get started. His advice to writers wanting to crossover into multimedia is to "find one small part of multimedia and start with that." He suggests audio because "it's 51 percent of every multimedia production, and if it's good, people will watch crappy video…[for now]." In other words, learn audio first.

Grab your audio recorder and a microphone and record a key interview. Then write a blog post or article and upload an edited part of the audio file. That's multimedia in its most basic form. As freelance journalists, most of us already record important interviews, so this isn't a big conceptual leap. Making a story multi-media means taking what we already do one step further: incorporate part of the sound track into the final piece. "Once you're comfortable with the basics, let your editors know what you can do and start the conversation about how to enhance the story with multimedia elements," advises Hernandez.

Hernandez also gave us a tour of the basic tools of multimedia (see sidebar). Drawing from his experience as a photographer and producer he explained which tools work best in which situation, how much they cost, and where to find free tools. I was inspired by the session, and I have been experimenting. But I have yet to pitch a multimedia story. I am still following another piece of Hernandez's advice for working with multimedia, "be patient, practice, fail, and practice some more."

But where's the payoff for the investment in learning, equipment, and time spent producing a piece? NASW has awarded thousands of dollars in career grants funds to members seeking the answer. The most obvious payoff is staying relevant as a freelance journalist working in the reality of digital media, even if a bigger paycheck is not immediately forthcoming.

Book writers face this issue most urgently. The consensus from a panel discussion on the future of books indicates that ebooks, such as those on the Kindle, are a growing sector and that enhanced digital content is rapidly becoming part of the standard package that writers must deliver. So writers fluent in multimedia storytelling may have an advantage. The same argument holds for writers working for magazines shifting to digital formats, including those such as *Wired*, now presented on the iPad. Being able to visualize, collect and pitch multimedia enhancements, even if they're not used, shows understanding of the business as it is evolving.

At the end of the conference, we toasted to our future success with champagne. Larson posed a final question, the one that drove her to organize the meeting in the first place: What is the future of freelancing?

After two days together we knew the answer: Us. ■

In Memoriam

Ann E. Ewing
Science journalist turned nation's eyes to "black holes"

Ann E. Ewing, 89, a journalist who specialized in writing about science and who is thought to be the first to report on so-called black holes, died in Washington, D.C., on July 24 of pneumonia after a stroke.

Ewing wrote from the late 1940s to the late 1960s for Science News, a publication of the Society for Science and the Public. Her specialties included astronomy, physics, and medicine. After leaving *Science News*, she became a freelance reporter who wrote for medical trade newspapers.

Physicist John Wheeler has often been credited with coining the term "black hole" to describe a collapsed star whose mass is so great that not even light can escape its gravitational field. Wheeler reportedly first used the term at a 1967 conference.

However, Ewing used the term as early as 1964 in her story "'Black Holes' in Space" after apparently hearing it at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. She did not identify the source of the quote.

Ann Elizabeth Ewing was a native of East Grand Rapids, Mich., and a 1941 physics and chemistry graduate of Ripon College in Ripon, Wis. She studied at the University of Chicago before joining the Navy in 1942, during World War II. She served overseas as a Navy journalist until 1946.

After the war, she received a pilot's license and enjoyed flying small planes as a hobby.

In 1972, Ewing became one of the first female journalists admitted to the National Press Club. Previously, she was a member of the Women's National Press Club and contributed to two cookbooks by club members. She was active with civil rights and veterans groups.

(Source: The Washington Post*)*

■ ■ ■

Diana Benzaia

ScienceWriters has learned belatedly of the death of Diana Benzaia, a freelance health/medical writer based in New York City. She had been an NASW member for 30 years. ■

PIO Forum

by Joel Strasser

Memoirs of a high-tech PR pioneer

IT'S BEEN ALMOST 50 YEARS SINCE I GRADUATED WITH A DEGREE IN JOURNALISM ALONG WITH AN EQUALLY HEAVY CONCENTRATION IN ELECTRONICS ENGINEERING. I SPENT MY EARLY YEARS WRITING FOR THREE TECHNICAL MAGAZINES PLUS A SYNDICATED SCIENCE COLUMN FOR A NATIONAL NEWSWIRE SERVICE.

Then, switching to agency and corporate public relations, my earliest assignments were to translate technical specs and descriptions into comprehensible language for both lay and technical readers.

On joining Hill and Knowlton, then the world's largest PR firm, I was struck by their surprise at my seemingly dissimilar degree concentrations, with their realization that I might offer practical solutions to some of their more "difficult and complex" client communications challenges. When asked to launch a specialized client unit concentrating on activities for technology businesses, I realized we were tackling previously uncharted communications challenges.

Today's household words were indeed early technology wizardry. I recall introducing the world's first pocket calculator, built and introduced in 1971 by Bowmar Corporation. It was larger than a pack of cigarettes, with a selling price of $480. Visiting the Acton, Mass. factory, I asked a Bowmar engineer how low the selling price might actually get. His guess: $25. How much can you get them for now?

One day I was demonstrating the first pocket calculator to a writer from *Newsweek* over lunch at the former Le Chanteclair Restaurant on 49th Street just off Madison Avenue, in New York. Suddenly, I looked up and our lunch table was completely surrounded by the restaurant's staff, including the restaurant owner, René Dreyfus; an international racing car driver of such distinction that he was awarded the Legion of Honor by French President Charles DeGaulle. After explaining that we were using the device to accurately compute the amount of our tip, we were invited into his office to compare its performance against his electric hand-crank adding machine. Needless to say, we had the total dollar amount displayed before he could touch the crank handle.

I directed the PR roll-out of the Kaypro computer, an early C/PM computer that pre-dated IBM's first computer with its MS-DOS format. One of our earliest promotions was to ensure that a large number of journalists wrote their stories on Kaypro computers. I can claim responsibility for getting the first computer into the NYC chapter office of the Public Relations Society of America, as well as the first computers into both the *Time-Life* Building and the *New York Times* editorial offices.

When we introduced the world's first video tape recorder, in 1970, a system called Avco Cartrivision rolled out by the same entrepreneur who brought Volkswagen to the United States after World War II, they fared better with automobiles than with TV. The system used square cartridges the size of a hardcover novel

Joel Strasser, APR, Fellow PRSA (Jjas888@aol.com), was founding chair of the Public Relations Society of America's Technology Professional Interest Section in 1985, which this year celebrates its 25th anniversary. Strasser has been a member of NASW since 1976.

EWING COURTESY OF THE EWING FAMILY; GORDER COURTESY OF JO McCULTY

with player-recorders married to specific brands of TV receivers. Those combo players didn't catch on, and the VHS format ultimately prevailed for many years. I purchased my first VCR for about $1,200, which offered capabilities identical to a VCR which in 2009 sold for about $50.

To support the very first effort to commercialize solar energy, we devised a program in 1980 we named "Operation Sunpower." It was a nine-state effort that doubled the number of solar-power installations in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and all six New England states. The effort promoted and explained the technologies of solar energy and its energy savings to encourage homeowner acceptance. To advance widespread adoption, we worked with the Northeast Solar Energy Center, then a commercialization arm of the U.S. Department of Energy, plus the availability of financial "HUD grants" from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. We demonstrated effectiveness by tracking and directly correlating levels of PR exposure and staging high-profile public PR events with the dollar value of HUD grant applications filed in each specific geographic area. "Operation Sunpower" went on to win one of the earliest technology-oriented Silver Anvil Awards, which PRSA presents for best PR programs.

During the last century, music, video, and movies exhausted a series of different formats. Music was stored on several different formats of vinyl disks (78s, 45s, 33s), and then tape including dual-track, four-track, and eight-track, and subsequently burned into today's optical disks or CDs. Soon, pictures joined sound on reflective optical discs, with full-length movies stored on optical discs, the first ones as large as 14 inches in diameter.

The first videodisk format that emerged was initially adopted by such companies as Pioneer, Philips, and Sony and played on specialized videodisk players, reminiscent of earlier phonographs that played LPs. For North American Philips, we engaged the entire Hill and Knowlton national network of offices throughout the country to stage roll-out press events in 50 major U.S. cities to introduce that early technology. One interesting ploy was to freeze frame the movie videodisc "Earthquake" in mid-track to be able to see a Los Angeles skyscraper building physically broken into seemingly thousands of pieces of disintegrating debris. As we know, the large videodiscs eventually shrank in size, and with further advances in technology, today's movies are optically stored on DVDs. ■

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PRSA Resources Available to NASW Members

Chartered in 1947, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) (**www.prsa.org**) is the world's largest organization of public relations professionals. PRSA's Technology Section serves communication professionals who counsel and create public relations and marketing communications programs for technology companies and technology-related institutions. PRSA also serves PR practitioners who use technology-based tactics. PRSA also has a professional interest Health Academy dedicated to serving PR practitioners in health care. Many services and benefits are available to NASW members serving in PR and PIO positions.

Freely Accessible PRSA Offerings

- **Online Resources** ComPRehension Blog, PR Say Blog, Technology Section LinkedIn Group, and a Technology Section Ning/Twitter Account **http://www.prsa.org**
- **Webinars** **http://www.prsa.org/calendar/date/**
- **Podcasts** Many are PRSA Silver Anvil case studies for communications professionals in technology and health care **http://podcast.prsa.org/pr/prsa**
- **Awards** Excellence in Technology Journalism awards recognize technology journalism **http://bit.ly/bgpoT6**

PRSA Facebook and Twitter Accounts
http://facebook.com/group.php?gid=2212366766 @PRSA

Health Academy Facebook
http://facebook.com/group.php?gid=8730889166

PRSA Jobcenter
http://twitter.com/prsajobcenter

Our Gang

After 18 years of freelancing, **Katherine Austin** has taken a full-time job—as senior science writer for Vancouver biotech firm Tekmira Pharmaceuticals. "I was a bit worried that returning to an office job might kill me," she says. "But the people are so great and the science is so interesting that it's actually been a lot more fun than the kinds of work I was doing on my own." Write her at kdaustin@nasw.org.

Matt Bille reports that the history committee of the American Astronautical Society has published, through ABC-Clio, the two-volume *Space Exploration and Humanity: A Historical Encyclopedia*. In it, he authored six articles on topics including the impact of Sputnik, the unfairly maligned Project Vanguard, and SolRad—the first solar radiation satellite, which had a double life as an electronic intelligence system. Write him at MattWriter@aol.com.

Meanwhile, **John Borchardt** takes a break from finishing his book, *Accelerating Innovation through Effective Laboratory Management*. "In the wake of the BP oil spill," he says. "I've started to cover deepwater oil well drilling and completion technology and have had one feature article published—in the August issue of *Mechanical Engineering*—and two others in press." Write him at jkborchardt@aol.com.

Heather Buschman recently left her job as scientific writer and liaison with the Consortium for Functional Glycomics to become the new science writer in the communications department at the Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute. "One

of the best parts of my job is providing content for the institute's new blog, recently launched by my colleague and fellow NASW member, **Josh Baxt**, associate director of scientific communications," she says. Write her at hbuschman@gmail.com. The blog, *Beaker*, can be found at **http://beaker.sanfordburnham.org**.

After 25 years of covering mostly environment-related beats for the *Fresno Bee*, NASW cybrarian **Russell Clemings** began a sabbatical in August. Besides continuing his NASW work, he is looking for freelance projects, with a focus on start-to-finish website design, management, and hosting. If you want to set up a website—or improve the one you've got—but don't know where to start, drop him a line at russell@clemings.com.

Katie Cottingham wants to announce that she has a new job. She was a freelance writer and editor, but since June she's been working full time at the Michael J. Fox Foundation in New York City as associate director and editor of one of foundation websites called PD Online Research (**http://www.pdonlineresearch.org/**). She's beefing up the site's news section, adding summaries of research papers to the mix. Write her at kcottingham@jhu.edu.

Those of you who follow **Bob Finn** on Twitter know that he shared this news in August: "Excited to announce that I've been promoted to web content editor for the Internal Medical News digital network. New website coming soon." Ask him for details at finn@nasw.org.

Congratulations are in order for **Barbara Gastel**. She'll be receiving Sigma Xi's 2010 John P. McGovern Science and Society Award Nov. 13 at the Sigma Xi annual meeting. The award aims to recognize a "highly visible and prominent spokesperson for the public understanding and appreciation of science." Gastel is professor of integrative biosciences and of humanities in medicine at Texas A&M University, where she coordinates the master's degree program in science and technology journalism. Write her at b-gastel@tamu.edu.

Helen Pearson, chief features editor at *Nature*, won the 2010 Wistar Institute Science Journalism Award. Judges called her article ("One Gene, Twenty Years") "a thoughtful exploration of the successes and disappointments in the 20 years of research since the discovery of the cystic fibrosis gene." They also commended her "for doing what science journalists often neglect—revisit long-ago discoveries that haven't yet lived up to the scientists' or public's expectations. And ask why." Find out for yourself at **http://bit.ly/ddCxcr** and congratulate Pearson at h.pearson@us.nature.com.

The Association of British Science Writers honored **John Travis**, European news editor for *Science*, with its 2010 Best News Item award. The winning item, "Scientists Decry 'Flawed' and 'Horrifying' Nationality Tests," appeared in the Sept. 29, 2009 issue of the magazine, and detailed scientists objections to a project using DNA testing to determine the nationality of people seeking asylum in the U.K. Write to Travis at jtravis@science-int.co.uk and read the article at **http://bit.ly/a0Vslf**.

Andrea Gibson launched a redesign of the Ohio University research magazine *Perspectives* earlier this year. As an experiment, they published the Spring/Summer 2010 edition on Issuu, a digital publishing platform that simulates flipping through the pages of the publication. Check out that issue at **http://bit.ly/5yVJkm** and e-mail Gibson at gibsona@ohio.edu.

The National Press Foundation has awarded *Science* online news editor **David Grimm** its Ann Cottrell Free Animal Reporting Award which honors excellence in reporting about threats facing animals. The foundation cited Grimm's 2009 story "A Cure for Euthanasia?" (*Science*) which detailed a birth control vaccine for cats and dogs meant to curb pet overpopulation. Read it at **http://bit.ly/ss7Bl** and congratulate Grimm at dgrimm@aaas.org.

In September, the California Academy of Sciences launched freelancer **Raven Hanna**'s collaborative project, Science Tarot. The scientist-turned-artist describes the project as "a mix of science, art, and storytelling. We have reinterpreted each traditional tarot card with an illustration inspired by science or a scientist. The deck comes with a booklet describing the science of each card." Find out more at **http://www.sciencetarot.com** and e-mail her at raven@madewithmolecules.com.

Sandra Katzman is starting an experimental communication research project in which she asks the question, "Do visual cues attenuate onset time of 'the blank look' during attempted comprehension of a second language?" Katzman says that an article on the subject was requested by the Osaka University bi-annual *Journal of the Research Institute for World Languages*. You can read more, comment, or even participate in the research design or the research itself at **http://bit.ly/cOwskc**. E-mail her at katzman@stanfordalumni.org.

September was a busy and exciting month for **Mary Knudson**. Johns Hopkins University medical faculty quickly filled her new course "Writing Health Stories for the Public" to capacity. She quips that the job has her "looking for the next Atul Gawande." September also saw the launch of her new blog, *Heart Wise*, on U.S. News & World Report.com. The magazine asked Knudson to start the blog after it noticed her book, *Living Well with Heart Failure, the Misnamed, Misunderstood Condition*, which she co-authored with Edward K. Kasper, M.D. Write to her at knudson@erols.com.

Sid Perkins has left *Science News* and moved with his wife to eastern Tennessee, where he'll be freelancing as well as overseeing construction of a new house on the family farm. He wants to assure everyone that he'll be keeping the sperkins@nasw.org e-mail alias, just forwarding it to a new Blackberry, which he affectionately calls his "new Siamese twin." ■

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CLANCY COURTESY OF MARC LIEBERMAN

Regional Groups

CHICAGO

Chicago Science Writers had an electrifying meeting May 13 when Daniel Abraham, a material scientist and team leader at Argonne National Laboratory, discussed the latest work on improving batteries. Batteries hold much promise for reducing

dependence on fossil fuel, but also pose challenges. Abraham explained how ubiquitous batteries have become. In describing cell phones, he explained how the batteries become less and less effective over time requiring more frequent recharging. He also talked about the potential for batteries to have an impact on reducing dependence on gasoline for cars. Some conventional batteries used in earlier versions of electrically powered cars were too big to be practical and required frequent recharging, a problem when there are few stations with the right kind of power. The lithium-ion cell has become the front-runner in rechargeable technology for a vast array of applications, said Abraham, a leading scientist in the field of lithium-ion batteries. At Argonne, he leads the effort to identify performance degradation mechanisms in lithium-ion cells to enable development of alternative materials and components that enhance cell performance, calendar life, and safety. He described the development of electrode and electrolyte materials for sustainable and environmentally friendly batteries and the challenge of recycling existing lithium-ion cells to recover nonrenewable components.

Chicago Science Writers enjoys a partnership with the science writing program at the Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University. Thus, the meeting was held at the Medill downtown center and included graduate students in the science writing program.

NEW YORK

Science Writers in New York (SWINY) launched its summer program with fun and networking at its June 8 social, held in midtown Manhattan at the Windfall Tavern. Extending networking opportunities, on June 22, SWINY co-hosted an event with the New York chapter of the Association for Women in Science (AWIS) entitled "A Window into Science/A Window into Book Authoring: A Conversation with Julie Des Jardins, author of *The Madame Curie Complex*." The discussion with Des Jardins, a Baruch College historian, focused on the accomplishments of and challenges for several of the successful 20th century women in science. As SWINY member Sheila Haas noted, "… (event) co-sponsorship not only brings in more people, it's a fertile mix that takes the discussion to a new level."

On June 28, a panel of experts discussed the planned changes by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) in the definition of mental illnesses in the highly controversial fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*, slated for May 2013 publication. For example, Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) is not yet classified in the *DSM*. Discussing the matter were panelists Lucy Jane Miller, Ph.D., executive director of the Sensory Processing Disorder Foundation, in Denver, Colo,; Jennifer Jo Brout, Ed.M., Psy.D., a psychologist dedicated to furthering knowledge about SPD and its application to mental health; and Brout's 16-year-old daughter, Emily Brout, who added a very poignant and greatly appreciated note to the program by describing her struggles with SPD. Other experts that evening were David Shaffer, M.D., a member of the American Psychiatric Association's DSM-5 Task Force Representative to the ICD-11 Work Group on Mental and Behavioral Disorders in Children and Adolescents; and Andy Shih, Ph.D., vice president of scientific affairs at Autism Speaks, an organization dedicated to increasing awareness of autism spectrum disorders and funding research into autism causes, prevention, and treatments.

The summer was topped off with an August 22 trip to the 2.5 acre "green roof" atop the U.S. Postal Service's 9th Avenue sorting facility, which is NYC's newest and largest green-roof project and research site. Stuart Gaffin of the Earth Institute at Columbia University served as guide for the evening. Gaffin discussed the vast potential for "greening" NYC, offered by the ~1 billion square feet of (mainly black tar) rooftops. SWINY member Robin Lloyd blogged about the evening for *Scientific American* (**http://bit.ly/9Sqn1o**). Information on other SWINY program available at **http://www.swiny.org/events/**.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

In June, the D.C. Science Writers Association (DCSWA) hosted a happy hour event to welcome the incoming AAAS mass media fellows and other science writing interns arriving in the city this summer. Social events continued in July with a small but enthusiastic group who gathered to compete in a semi-annual DCSWA not-just-science-trivia contest, battling it out despite extremely inclement weather.

About 30 DCSCA members and guests toured the Aeras Global TB Vaccine Foundation in nearby Rockville, Md., on June 30, hearing from researchers about ongoing and planned clinical trials of several candidate vaccines for tuberculosis. They toured the labs where the vaccines are being developed, and visited the BioSafety Level 2 manufacturing facility where the vaccines will be mass-produced if they are approved. ■

Science Milestones in the 75 Years of NASW

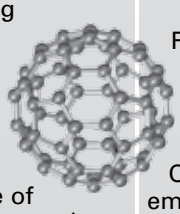
In the spring and summer issues, ScienceWriters *reflected on events from 1934-84. This issue concludes with the discoveries and innovations of the last twenty-five years.*

1985

First robot-assisted surgical procedure performed

Antarctic ozone hole discovered

Genetic fingerprinting (DNA profiling) developed



Buckeyball fullerenes (an allotrope of carbon) discovered

1986

Space Shuttle Challenger explodes shortly after lift-off

Fifth fundamental force (hypercharge) discovered

High-temperature superconductivity demonstrated

Halley's Comet visible from Earth for first time since 1910

1987

World population reaches 5 billion

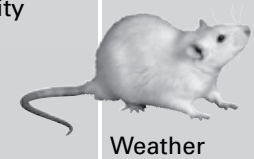
First HIV treatment (AZT) receives FDA approval

Oldest known embryo found in fossilized dinosaur egg

All California condors placed in captive breeding program

1988

First U.S. patent for a genetically engineered animal issued



Weather Surveillance Doppler Radar invented

1989

Oil tanker Exxon Valdez runs aground in Prince William Sound, Alaska

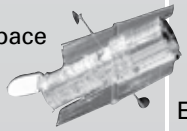
Human gene transfer developed

1990

Largest, best preserved Tyrannosaurus rex ("Sue") found

HyperText Mark-up language (HTML) created

Hubble Space Telescope launched



Clean Air Act Amendments address acid rain, ozone depletion, and toxic air pollution

1991

World Wide Web debuts on the Internet

Gopher becomes the first user-friendly Internet search interface

First cholera epidemic in a century sickens 100,000 in South America

1992

Over 100 heads of state attend first international Earth Summit, in Rio de Janeiro

NASA's Cosmic Background Explorer (COBE) probe mapped the fiery Big Bang's aftermath

Personal e-mail becomes available

Fossil remains of feathered-dinosaur supports hypothesis that birds descended from dinosaurs

1993

Global Positioning System (GPS) allows precise latitude, longitude, and altitude information for any location on the planet

World Wide Web accounts for 1% of Internet traffic

1994

Flavr Savr© tomato receives FDA approval as first genetically engineered food product

1995

Ebola outbreak kills hundreds in Zaire

DVD (Digital Versatile Disc or Digital Video Disc) invented

Long-sought, subatomic particle Top Quark detected

ALL MILESTONE PHOTO CREDITS APPEAR ON PAGE 33

1996

Dolly the Sheep cloned via somatic cell nuclear transfer

"Mad Cow" disease outbreak in Britain

1997

First human embryonic stem cells isolated

Two unmanned spacecraft send back data from the surface of Mars

Brilliant comet Hale-Bopp visible from Earth for 18 months

1998

Internet search engine Google launched

Neutrinos shown to have mass spurring search for leftover neutrinos from Big Bang

Construction begins on the International Space Station

Monoclonal antibody Herceptin receives FDA approval as a cancer treatment

1999

Number of Internet users worldwide reaches 150 million

World braces for Y2K millennium software bug

2000

"I Love You" virus disrupts computers worldwide

First draft of the human genome released

NEAR spacecraft becomes first to orbit an asteroid

2001

Implantation of first artificial heart in a human patient

Stem-cell research hotly debated by politicians and the public

A new class of cancer drugs (Gleevec) targets abnormal proteins rather than rapidly dividing cells

2002

Hubble Space Telescope finds evidence of a medium-mass black holes sink

Virtual keyboard invented

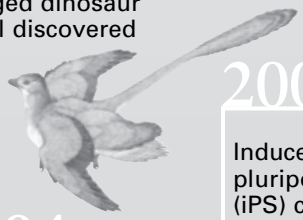
2003

Space Shuttle Columbia disintegrates reentering the Earth's atmosphere

Astronomers Confirm Age of Universe

SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) genome decoded

Winged dinosaur fossil discovered



2004

First pulsars confirmed by astrophysicists

Deadly Indian Ocean tsunami spawned after 9.0 magnitude earthquake

Fossils of small human species (Homo floresiensis) found in Indonesia

Water on Mars discovered

2005

Europe's Huygens probe lands on Saturn's moon Titan

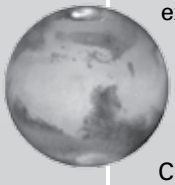
Hurricane Katrina leaves much of New Orleans under water after levees break

2006

Pluto not a planet, astronomers rule

More than one million bases of Neanderthal DNA sequenced

New microscopy techniques resolve nanometer-sized features of proteins



2007

Induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells created from skin cells

First e-ink electronic reader devices reach consumer market

2008

First direct observation of exoplanets

Ice found on Mars

Large Hadron Collider, the largest and most powerful particle accelerator, goes online

2009

Arctic permafrost begins to thaw releasing massive amounts of methane

A new strain of H1N1 influenza virus (aka "swine flu") leads to a global pandemic

Ardipithecus ramidus (Ardi), oldest skeleton of a prehuman hominid found (4.4 million years)

Sectioning of the most famous brain in memory science (patient HM) streamed live over the Internet

2010

Scientists create first self-replicating synthetic life

Eruption of Iceland's Eyjafjallajokull volcano disrupts international air travel for weeks

Deepwater Horizon well blowout: Largest marine oil spill in petroleum industry history

Entries compiled by Lynne Friedmann and Julie Kinyoun

Evert Clark/Seth Payne Award

The winner of the 2010 Evert Clark/Seth Payne Award, an annual prize for young science journalists, is Amber Dance, a writer in Pasadena, Calif. Dance received the award and its $1,000 prize for four stories: "Bacterial Waists: Bacteria Living in Our Guts May Play a Role in Obesity" (*Los Angeles Times*); "From Pond Scum to pharmacy shelf" (*Nature Medicine*), "DNA Referees" (*Los Angeles Times*); and "Illegal Whale Meat Traced Back to Japan" (*Nature*).

Evert Clark/Seth Payne Award winner Amber Dance

The panel of judges cited Dance for her impressive package of stories, which showed her versatility and mastery of topics that ranged from epigenetics to intestinal fauna. The judges said that Dance brought the reader deep into complex subjects with engaging writing, good organization, and the use of colorful quotes. The story on pond scum was a particular favorite.

Dance holds a Ph.D. in biology from UC San Diego. Her first foray as a news writer was for the newsletter of the Association for Women in Science (San Diego chapter). Dance then took an introductory science writing course, taught by *SW* editor Lynne Friedmann through UC San Diego Extension, and went on to complete the UC Santa Cruz science communication program under the guidance of NASW member Rob Irion.

The award will be presented by the Evert Clark Fund and the National Association of Science Writers, in conjunction with the National Press Foundation. The ceremony will take place during the annual meeting of the National Association of Science Writers and the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing, in New Haven, Conn.

The judges also awarded an honorable mention to Sadie Dingfelder for what they called a "wonderful" tale of a cellist who develops and tests novel ideas about the evolution and effects of music. The story, entitled "Play that Monkey Music," appeared in the *Washington City Paper*. The judges commended the story for using vivid characters and a compelling narrative to illuminate the often surprising twists and turns in the pathways and processes of science.

The Clark/Payne Award encourages young science writers by recognizing outstanding reporting in all fields of science.

Judges for the 2010 award were Susan Milius, writer at *Science News*; Liz Pennisi, writer at *Science*; Laura Helmuth, senior editor at *Smithsonian*; Eugene Russo, editor at *Nature*; and Gary Ellis, editor at the Congressional Research Service.

The Clark/Payne Award encourages young science writers by recognizing outstanding reporting in all fields of science. It is given each year in memory of journalists Ev Clark and Seth Payne, who offered friendship and advice to a generation of young reporters. This is the 21th year of the award.

All entrants must be age 30 or younger. The deadline for submissions is now the end of June each year. For more information, contact John Carey (john.a.carey@verizon.net). ■

(Source: news release and her proud instructors)

DANCE COURTESY OF JASON YOUNG

2010 Rennie Taylor/Alton Blakeslee Fellows Announced

The Council for the Advancement of Science Writing (CASW) has announced the recipients of this year's Rennie Taylor/Alton Blakeslee Graduate Studies Fellowships. The fellowships provide up to $2,000 for the academic year to both professional journalists and students of outstanding ability who have been accepted into graduate-level programs in science writing. The recipients (from a field of 31 applicants) are:

Joseph Castro, is a graduate of the University of Hawaii, Mamonoa, currently working with Sea Grant-Hawaii. Castro will be attending New York University.

Donna Hesterman completed her undergraduate work at the University of Florida, holds a master's degree from Auburn University, and is currently working as a USDA Wildlife Services biologist. She has been accepted for graduate studies by UC-Santa Cruz.

Laura Marsan, RN, completed her undergraduate work at the University of Cincinnati, Eastern Kentucky University. She holds both a bachelor's and master's degree in nursing. This fall she enters Columbia University.

Raphael Philip Rosen is a graduate of Williams College and is currently working in the Princeton Plasma Physics Lab. Rosen will pursue graduate studies at the University of Southern California.

…fellowships provide up to $2,000 for the academic year…

Support for this year's fellowships is The Brinson Foundation (**http://www.brinsonfoundation.org**). The fellowships honor the memory of Rennie Taylor, a science writer for the Associated Press, whose estate provided funds for the establishment of the American Tentative Society (ATS), and Alton Blakeslee, AP science editor, who served as longtime president of ATS. Fellowship application and eligibility requirements can be found at **www.casw.org**. ■

Updates to EurekAlert!

NEW! A tip sheet for *The Journal of Neuroscience* allows PIOs to know one week in advance when researchers from their organization will publish an article in an upcoming issue of the journal. The page will include the researcher's name, article title, publication date, and a link to the full text of the paper. To visit the tip sheet for *The Journal of Neuroscience*, log in to EurekAlert! then go to **http://www.eurekalert.org/pio/sfn**.

REDESIGNED! Science Reporting for Kids portal is a resource on science news for and about kids for report-ers writing for children and their families. In addition to kid-friendly feature stories and news releases, the portal provides links to educational websites and games covering a broad array of science topics. Visit **http://www.eurekalert.org/kidsnews**.

E-mail questions or comments about these and other EurekAlert! resources to webmaster@eurekalert.org or call 202-326-6716. ■

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

NEW MEMBERS

ARIZONA: Kirsten Traynor*, Arizona State Univ.; Margaret Kay Pingolt*, Arizona State Univ. **CALIFORNIA**: Anne Brooks Pfister, Mathematical Sciences Research Institute, Berkeley; Sascha Zubryd*, UC Santa Cruz; Shannon Weiman, freelance, La Jolla; Sarah Khan*, UCLA; Jim Downing, freelance, Oakland; Caitlin O'Connell, Stanford Univ. School of Medicine; Brad Plummer, SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, Menlo Park; Joy Ku, Stanford Univ.; Eva Gordon, freelance, Santa Monica. **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**: Katherine Bricceno*, The George Washington Univ.-Inst. of Biomed. Sciences; Erin Wayman, *EARTH Magazine*. **GEORGIA**: Maegan Rudd*, Univ. of Georgia, Athens. **HAWAII**: Inge Heyer, Joint Astronomy Centre, Hilo; Peter Michaud, Gemini Observatory/AURA, Hilo. **ILLINOIS**: Pamela Reid, freelance, Sidell; Nicole Schiffer*, Univ. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. **MASSACHUSETTS**: Siobhan Gallagher, Tufts Univ.; Mychal Voorhees*, Emerson Coll., Brookline; Steven Bedard, WGBH Interactive, Jamaica Plain; Genevieve Wanucha, freelance, Jamaica Plain; Elsa Yeung*, Univ. of Massachusetts Dartmouth. **MARYLAND**: Michele Glenn*, Towson Univ., Baltimore; Stephanie Guzik*, Nat'l Inst. of Health, Bethesda; Edward Winstead, Nat'l Cancer Inst.; Zemen Andemeskel Habtemariam*, Univ. of Maryland, College Park; Belle Waring, Nat'l Inst. of Health; Jennifer Rudolph Crawford, Nat'l Cancer Inst. **MICHIGAN**: Erica Lanni*, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Peter Lipson, freelance, Farmington. **MINNESOTA**: Katharine Hawthorne*, Stanford Univ. **MONTANA**: Evelyn Boswell, Montana State Univ., Bozeman. **NORTH CAROLINA**: Jennifer Weston, Coll. of Engineering, North Carolina State Univ., Raleigh. **NEW HAMPSHIRE**: Ellen Shepeluk*, Emerson Coll., Exeter. **NEW YORK**: Jennifer Welsh, *Discover Magazine*, Averill Park; Nikhil Swaminathan, freelance, Brooklyn; Joan Vos MacDonald, freelance, Croton-on-Hudson; Michelle Spektor*, Cornell Univ.; Adrienne Burke, The New York Academy of Sciences, NYC; Ferris Jabr*, NYU; Nazlie Latefi, freelance, NYC; Debra Tillinger, freelance, NYC; Emily Voigt, freelance, NYC; Francesco Fiondella, Int'l Res. Inst. for Climate and Society, Palisades; Kendra Snyder, Brookhaven Nat'l Lab. **OREGON**: Mary Engel, freelance, Portland. **PENNSYLVANIA**: Arielle Emmett, Arielle Emmett & Associates, Rutledge; Phillip Vinall, Medical Communications Depot, Inc., West Chester; Sophie Bushwick*, Carleton Coll., York. **TENNESSEE**: Whitney Holmes, Univ. of Tennessee, Knoxville; Sandra Allen McLean*, Univ. of Tennessee, Knoxville. **VIRGINIA**: Emily Kuhl, Amer. Psychiatric Assoc., Alexandria. **WASHINGTON**: Christopher Linder, freelance, Seattle. **WISCONSIN**: Tia Ghose, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (intern); Kira Leigh Hefty*, Northland Coll., Ashland; Sara Tiner, Standard Process, Inc., Palmyra. ■

**Student member*

BLOGGERS

continued from page 1

as a hobby.

Could this have been avoided? Maybe not, but maybe it's also an opportunity to wrestle once more with the question of whether blogging, and in this case a blog aggregation like ScienceBlogs, is really such a new thing that it demands new rules. Or can it be fitted into familiar contexts and the existing rules tweaked to accommodate it?

To me ScienceBlogs is not new at all. New, yes, in the sense that it is formed from electrons rather than paper and ink and—this is a delightful novelty for writers, and it may have unpredictable consequences—commands near-unlimited space rather than cramming a piece into finite column inches. But its roots go far, far back, at least as far back as the 18th century coffee-house journals of Addison and Steele.

ScienceBlogs is a miscellany of news and opinion and politics and humor and gossip, just like *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* (of 1711) and just like contemporary magazines and journals of opinion carved from dead trees and the Internet. Readers of today's pubs expect that editorial content can be distinguished from ads with ease. There was a lame, belated attempt at that at ScienceBlogs. But that interim solution—labeling the Pepsi blog "Advertorial"—won't do. "Advertorial" is trade jargon. Magazines don't use it to label their advertorials; their label is the perfectly up-front "Advertisement." All readers understand what that means.

Not that getting the label right would have fixed the problem. There was still the clumsy failure to communicate the new plans in advance to resident bloggers. Moreover, there are hints in a number of posts that this was only the latest in a series of other slights and failures to communicate. At least one star blogger who departed, Rebecca Skloot, said she'd been thinking about leaving anyway.

THE SEED OF UNDERSTANDING?

Mad Mike's analysis sounds sound to me. ScienceBlogs is well-known and for the most part well-regarded. This is a case where the child is far more famous, in many circles, than the parent magazine. But if *Seed* managers are living in a different universe, the universe of traditional (paper-based) magazines, they may not get it.

Well, perhaps they are beginning to get it now. "I want this blog to be a place where we can have a thoughtful conversation about the future of ScienceBlogs," says Adam Bly, the CEO of Seed Media Group, in his very first blog post. It went up on July 8.

Or perhaps not. I wondered if he had studied at the Tiger Woods School of Image Management and was going to apologize. But no. We learn how much he loves science and the important places he's spoken and the important boards he's on. And this homily:

> These days, I spend a lot of time talking with scientists, governments, and NGOs about how to advance science towards the betterment of society…

He's calling his new blog Science is Culture. Which just happens to be the title of his forthcoming book.

I have rarely encountered a finer example of taking a lemon and making lemonade. ■

On science blogs this week: Fizz, posted July 9, 2010.

FREELANCE

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and annual retirement payments directly from our savings account. And we keep a calendar of payment dates, so that we're not blindsided by unexpected bills. For example, we know that our house and car insurance payments come due at the same time as our April federal taxes.

As a freelancer, it's important to do frequent accounting. Don't fall behind in sending out invoices—or reminders of unpaid invoices. And keep careful records of all your expenses and work-related mileage. I successfully fought New York's tax bureau over my home-office deductions, and I figure it's only a matter of time before the IRS audits my business.

Some people can't handle the bookkeeping hassles and insecurity of working without a regular paycheck and benefits. I found it unsettling at first, but now I'm convinced that working for multiple clients actually offers *more* job security than working for a single employer.

I'm not making as much money freelancing as I did when I held a staff position. But time is money, and I have more of the former now. As a staffer, I was often too busy to take all of my allotted vacation days. During my first year as a freelancer, I took 12 weeks of vacation. On purpose.

Whether you enjoy working at home may depend on your home as much as your personality. When I lived in a cramped apartment in Manhattan, I lasted only a couple of months as a freelancer before beating a fast retreat to a staff job. But now that I live in a three-bedroom house on 20 acres (with one bedroom used exclusively as my office), I love freelancing.

Successful freelancers often find that it pays to set up shop somewhere other than a major metropolitan area. One great thing about freelancing is that you can live almost anywhere you want—even in a foreign country. I live in a rural area with relatively low living expenses, and that helps my bottom line. But it comes with its own set of challenges: I'm beyond the reach of DSL, cable, and cell phone signals, so I pay for a satellite service that is faster than dial-up but not truly broadband. Power outages occasionally send me and my laptop to the local WiFi spot for an over-caffeinated day's work.

Few freelancers stick to a conventional daily schedule. I often run errands while others are at work, and it's not uncommon for me to work at odd hours to finish a quick-turnaround assignment. Sometimes I step away from my desk to wash dishes or mow the lawn. This kind of flexibility is especially valuable to people raising young children.

Freelancers have to work hard to avoid distractions. One strategy that helps me is to set aside blocks of time during each day where I allow no interruptions from e-mail, Twitter, or other electronic communications. Another strategy I use is a task list with no more than three "must do today" items on it. I feel good when I cross all those items off the list, and it helps me focus on my top priorities rather than putting off the hard stuff for tomorrow.

A freelancer is first and foremost a businessperson. Running your own business isn't just about managing your finances; it's also about developing new services and skills, and having the self-confidence to stick up for yourself on issues such as contract terms and rates.

Freelancers must think beyond narrow categories of work, such as science magazines. If you're open to working for a variety of media outlets and expanding your horizons beyond traditional "articles," you'll find no shortage of work.

You might be a gifted writer but if you aren't willing to put some effort into marketing and networking, you aren't likely to go far in freelancing. If you only want to report the news, maybe freelancing isn't for you. The freelance journalists who are succeeding in today's marketplace understand that they are entrepreneurs and community organizers as well as reporters.

I'm not a risk-taker by nature, and earlier in my career I had no ambitions of starting my own business. But I love the spirit of enterprise and adventure that infuses freelancing today, and I love working for myself.

I saw my layoff as an opportunity to evaluate and realign my priorities. My love for journalism hasn't diminished at all, but I'm happy to have left the 9-to-5 (or more like 7-to-7) world behind. Being "let go" was as liberating as it sounds. I lost my job but I got my life back. ■

ScienceWriters Welcomes Letters

Letters to the editor must include an e-mail and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited and used in print or digital form by NASW. Send to: Editor, *ScienceWriters*, POB 1725, Solana Beach, CA 92075 or editor@nasw.org. ■

MILESTONES

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It's That Time of Year

Membership Renewal

All NASW memberships expire on December 31 (including yours). Log in to www.nasw.org and renew online beginning November 18. Avoid a late fee by renewing before January 31.

The Authors Coalition Survey is now part of the online renewal process. A few minutes of your time translates into crucial funding for NASW programs that benefit science writers.

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