

The Newsletter of The National Association of

# ScienceWriters

## FEATURES

Asian Tsunami Brings  
Geophysics New Level of Respect 4

Postal Service Puts  
Its Stamp on Science 5

Science, Technology  
and the Bush Administration 6

EHP Flap Reveals Cautionary  
Perspective to Freelancers 7

Is *Seed* is Going to Pot? 9

Physics Karaoke Rocks the House 10

The Science of Science Lobbying 12

## COLUMNS

President's Letter 13

Cyberbeat 16

The Free Lance 17

PIO Forum 20

## NEWS

2005 NASW Annual  
Membership Meeting 14

NASW Budget Report 15

ACS Grady-Stack Award 22

2004 AAAS Science  
Journalism Awards 21

Biotech Buzz Fails to Communicate 21

News From Afar 22

Our Gang 23

Regional Groups 24

In Memoriam 25

Notices from Diane 28

Books By and For Members 29

New Members 30

Bulletin Boards/Ads 30

## WORLD FEDERATION OF SCIENCE JOURNALISTS OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED

by James Cornell

They came as uncommitted, unconvinced agnostics and left as true believers and dedicated supporters.

While the coming-out party for the World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ) in Canada last fall may not qualify as a full-blown inter-continental camp meeting, the fervor of its new converts was quite real, and the transformation of this fledgling, sometimes fumbling, fringe group into a major force in international journalism was just a bit miraculous.

"I came as a skeptic, but I will leave as an enthusiastic supporter," said one of the many science writers representing national associations who participated in the historic process of confirming and validating the WFSJ during the final hours of the World Conference of Science Journalists (WCSJ 2004), held in Montreal, Oct. 4-8.

More than 400 journalists from around the globe—a number far surpassing expectations and nearly exceeding accommodations—attended the extraordinarily successful conference, the fourth in a series that began with great hopes in Japan in 1992. Those hopes had been more than fulfilled by subsequent conferences in Hungary (1999) and Brazil (2002), and now by four days of northern exposure to science, journalism, and the roles of both in a modern sci-tech society.

The local organizers, the Canadian Science Writers Association and the *Association des Communicateurs Scientifiques du Quebec*, put together an outstanding program that included sessions on professional development and field trips to Canadian research sites.

And, thanks to Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), a major sponsor, scores of journalists from developing nations were able to attend—and to interact—with colleagues from both their own regions and from around the world.

For many of these writers, the conference offered a rare—if not first-time—opportunity to express openly their concerns, frustrations, and joys about the state of science journalism in their home countries—and their aspirations for improving it.

But nothing symbolized the success of WCSJ 2004 as did the emergence of the WFSJ.

First suggested at the Japan conference, then formally recommended in the 1999 Declaration of Budapest, shaped and refined during an interim conference hosted by Japan in 2001, and officially founded in Brazil (with officers,

*Jim Cornell is president of the International Science Writers Association.*



# NASW

National Association of Science Writers, Inc.

P.O. Box 890, Hedgesville, WV 25427-0890  
Phone 304-754-5077  
Fax 304-754-5076

Lynne Friedmann, *Editor*  
Earle Holland, *Assistant Editor, Web*  
Judith Schwartz, *Proofreader*  
Carol Kerr Graphic Design, *Design*

### Correspondence on Editorial Matters

Lynne Friedmann  
P.O. Box 1725, Solana Beach, CA 92075,  
e-mail lfriedmann@nasw.org.

### Correspondence on NASW Policy Matters

Laura van Dam, Freelance  
93 Fayerweather St., Cambridge, MA 02138;  
lvandam@nasw.org.

### Editorial Board

Joe Palca, National Public Radio  
jpalca@nasw.org

Paul Raeburn, Author  
praeburn@nasw.org

Deborah Blum, Freelance/U of Wisconsin  
dblum@wisc.edu

All articles and columns in the newsletter express the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of the institutions they represent nor of NASW. The Council for the Advancement of Science Writing provides generous financial support to NASW for the production of *ScienceWriters*.

Copyright © 2005 National Association of Science Writers. No portion of this newsletter may be reproduced in whole or in part without specific permission of the individual authors or permission of the copyright owners. Contact the editor for more information. *ScienceWriters* is printed on recycled paper.

### NASW CONTACT INFORMATION

#### Executive Director

Diane McGurgan  
diane@nasw.org

#### Officers

*President*  
Laura van Dam, Freelance  
lvandam@nasw.org

*Vice President*  
Robert Lee Hotz, *Los Angeles Times*  
leehotz@earthlink.net

*Treasurer*  
Carol Ezzell Webb, Freelance  
carol@ezzellwebb.com

#### Secretary

Mariette DiChristina, *Scientific American*  
mdichristina@sciam.com

#### Board Members at Large

Beryl Lief Benderly, Freelance  
blbink@aol.com

Glenda Chui, *San Jose Mercury News*  
gchui@sjmercury.com

Bob Finn, International Medical News Group,  
finn@nasw.org

Jon Franklin, University of Maryland  
jonfrank@nasw.org

Robin Marantz Henig, Freelance  
robinhenig@nasw.org

Tom Paulson, *Seattle Post Intelligencer*  
tompaulson@seattle-pi.com

Tabitha M. Powledge, Freelance  
tam@nasw.org

Nancy Shute, *US News & World Report*  
nshute@usnews.com

Sally Squires, *Washington Post*  
squires@washpost.com

Curt Suplee, National Science Foundation,  
csuplee@nsf.gov

Kelli Whitlock, Freelance  
kelli\_whitlock@nasw.org

#### Other NASW Personnel and Committees

Craig Hicks, NASW Cybrarian  
cybrarian@nasw.org

*Awards Committee*  
Jon Franklin, co-chair  
Bob Finn, co-chair

*Authors Coalition Liaison*  
Beryl Benderly, chair

*Council of National Journalism Organizations*  
Laura van Dam, liaison

*World Federation of Science Journalists*  
Deborah Blum, liaison

*Education Committee*  
Jeff Grabmeier, co-chair  
grabmeier.1@osu.edu  
John Travis, co-chair  
jtravis@nasw.org

#### Ethics Committee

Paul Raeburn, chair

#### FOIA Committee

Glenda Chui, chair

#### Freelance Committee

Dan Ferber, chair  
ferber@nasw.org

#### Internet Committee

Mariette DiChristina, co-chair  
Kelli Whitlock, co-chair

#### Membership Committee

Nancy Shute, chair

#### Publishing Committee

Jon Franklin, chair

#### Workshop Committee

Robert Lee Hotz, chair

### AVAILABLE FROM NASW

#### Mailing Lists

1446 Media List \$250.00  
2225 Entire Membership \$350.00  
[Available on pressure-sensitive labels in ZIP-code order]

**Note:** Purchase of the mailing list is intended for one-time use. Duplication by any means is expressly prohibited.

#### Book

*A Field Guide for Science Writers* (Paperback)  
\$15.00 per copy for members  
\$18.00 per copy for non-members, prepaid

#### Classified Ads

Newsletter: \$6.00 per line (10-line min.)  
Online only: \$65.00

#### To order, contact:

Diane McGurgan, NASW  
P.O. Box 890, Hedgesville, WV 25427-0890  
diane@nasw.org, 304-754-5077

### SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Summer Next Issue . . . . June 1, 2005

Fall . . . . . September 1, 2005

Winter . . . . . December 1, 2005

Spring . . . . . March 1, 2006

a constitution, and lofty goals, but limited cachet—and credibility), the WFSJ finally came of age in Montreal.

Evolving from what some critics initially dismissed as a minor and unnecessary addition to an already crowded field of writers' organizations, WFSJ has become, arguably, one of the most influential international journalism groups, with the potential to shape the future of world science communication.

Even before this conference's offbeat opening ceremony, five national groups arrived in Montreal with offers to host the next one. Solid proposals were received from China, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Australia, with the last selected to host the next WCSJ in Melbourne, most likely in late 2006 or early 2007, mainly on the basis of a pledge to involve young journalists from the southeast Asia and Pacific regions.

The spirited lobbying by each of the delegations prompted Werner Hadorn, a founding member of the WFSJ board, to predict that "the next round of bidding may be as intense as that to host the Olympics." Most extraordinary, WFSJ, whose board made the final site selection, emerged as the primary sponsor of the very conferences at which it was once only a vague, idealistic, and sometimes contentious subject of debate.

As constituted, the WFSJ is an association of associations, whose members are other national, regional, and international science journalism organizations rather than individuals. Individuals living in countries that do not yet have national associations will be represented in the Federation by the International Science Writers Association (ISWA).

On Oct. 7, following the formal sessions of the WCSJ 2004, representatives of those national associations already members of WFSJ (about a dozen), as well as observers from other national groups planning to join, gathered to formally name Australia as the next WCSJ site, to okay some constitutional amendments, and to elect a new executive board.

Interestingly, representatives of several national groups that had either been openly hostile or silently indifferent to the idea of a federation now expressed new appreciation for its potential, in part for its role in organizing WCSJ 2004. For example, Pallab Ghosh, president of the Association of British Science Writers (ABSW), said he was initially skeptical before coming to Montreal, but that he had changed his mind. After seeing the success of the Fourth World Conference, he "realized the WFSJ was an extremely worthwhile project" which he intended to recommend to his members at their next annual assembly.

Similarly, Laura van Dam, then NASW's president-elect (who shared representational duties at the conference with President Deborah Blum), said she would also recommend that NASW become a member of the WFSJ. The NASW board subsequently voted to join; an ABSW decision awaits that organization's January meeting.

---

### *The current members of WFSJ, as of press time:*

#### **General**

- The International Science Writers Association (ISWA), <http://internationalsciencewriters.org>

#### **The Americas**

- Asociación Argentina de Periodismo Científico, [www.revistaelcerebro.com.ar/cerebro/congreso/periodism.htm](http://www.revistaelcerebro.com.ar/cerebro/congreso/periodism.htm)
- Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Científico (ABJC)
- Association des communicateurs scientifiques du Québec (ACSQ), [www.acs.qc.ca/](http://www.acs.qc.ca/)
- Canadian Science Writers' Association (CSWA), [www.sciencewriters.ca/](http://www.sciencewriters.ca/)
- Colombian Association of Science Journalism (ACPC)
- National Association of Science Writers (NASW)

#### **Asia**

- Australian Science Communicators, [www.asc.asn.au/](http://www.asc.asn.au/)
- Chinese Society for Science and Technology Journalism (CSSTJ)
- Japanese Association of Science and Technology Journalists (JASTJ), [www.jastj.jp/e/](http://www.jastj.jp/e/)
- Korea Science Reporters Association (KOSRA), [www.scinews.co.kr/sci\\_english.php](http://www.scinews.co.kr/sci_english.php)
- Medical Journalists Association of Japan

#### **Europe**

- Asociación Española de Periodismo Científico (AEPC)
- Catalan Association of Science Journalists
- European Union of Science Journalists' Associations (EUSJA), [www.esf.org/eusja/EUSJA.htm](http://www.esf.org/eusja/EUSJA.htm)
- Irish Science Journalists Association (ISJA)
- Journalistenvereinigung für technisch-wissenschaftliche Publizistik, Germany (TELI), [www.teli.de/](http://www.teli.de/)
- Russian Association of Science Writers and Journalists (INTELLECT)

---

### *The new officers are:*

President Wilson da Silva (Australia)  
 Vice President Istvan Palugyai (Hungary)  
 Past President Veronique Morin (Canada)  
 Treasurer Mariko Takahashi (Japan)  
 Secretary Diran Onifade (Nigeria)  
 Member-at-large Lisbeth Fog (Colombia)  
 Member-at-large Pallab Ghosh (UK)

[The membership wisely decided that not only should the WFSJ president be a resident of the country hosting the next conference, but that, for the sake of continuity, the immediate past president should remain as a member of the executive board.]

In addition to the board, two committees were established to guide the programs (training, education, promotion of journalism, etc.) and the finances of the federation as it moves toward Melbourne—and beyond.

***Finance Committee:***

Mariko Takahashi (chair), Kaiander Sempler (Sweden), Jan Rydman (Finland), and Werner Hadorn (Switzerland).

***Program Committee:***

Pallab Ghosh (chair), Deborah Blum (USA), Lisbeth Fog (Columbia), Wolfgang Goede (Germany), James Cornell (USA), and Nadia El-Awady (Egypt).

Already, the program committee—mainly due to the efforts of Blum and El-Awady—has prepared a letter for distribution to national associations around the world asking for suggestions of ways that the WFSJ might help strengthen and enhance such groups, and particularly those in developing countries.

In addition, Goede, science editor for Germany's *PM Magazine*, is exploring how the concept of "narrative journalism," common in much of North America and some parts of Europe, can be introduced to other cultures as a means of improving the communication of scientific and technical subjects to general audiences, especially in societies where "storytelling" is already an accepted tradition. His own magazine was a pioneer of this approach in Europe.

Finally, in what may prove to be the most important move for WFSJ's future, Jean-Marc Fleury of IDRC was named its executive director. In his position with IDRC, from which he will soon retire, Fleury was instrumental in bringing many of those developing world journalists to Montreal.

***...WFSJ is an association  
of associations...  
rather than individuals.***

Fleury will be meeting with potential sponsors and funders in the next few months. Any NASW members with suggestions for sources of financial aid may contact him directly at [jfleury@idrc.ca](mailto:jfleury@idrc.ca). He is also managing the enhanced WFSJ Web site, where you can find the federation constitution, minutes of its recent meetings, and links to the proceedings of the Montreal conference and the prospects for the next one in Australia [http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-67365-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-67365-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html). ■



**AFTER THE TSUNAMI  
NEW RESPECT  
FOR GEOPHYSICS**

*by Joel Achenbach*

The annual meeting of the American Geophysical Union, in San Francisco, drew an estimated 11,000 scientists, teachers, journalists, and geophysics groupies. The schedule of talks could be found in a bound volume as thick as a phone book. You never see a geophysicist in ordinary life, but apparently the world is crawling with them.

They came to talk about everything from the ozone layer to the big wad of iron at the center of the Earth. Also about other planets. And magnetic fields. Solar wind. Water on Mars. To be at this convention was to be immersed to the eyebrows in scientific knowledge. It is intellectually fashionable to fetishize the unknown, but at AGU, a person will get the opposite feeling—that science is a voracious, relentless, and tireless enterprise, and that soon there may not remain on this Earth an unturned stone.

As a part-time science writer, I'm supposed to be a translator, deftly turning the complex into the comprehensible. Unfortunately, with each passing year the chasm between modern science and my medieval brain grows wider. Supposedly, a writer isn't supposed to "dumb down" the material, but that's the only way I can get it to the point where I can understand it.

The only consolation is that scientists have the same problem. The sedimentary guys find the igneous guys inscrutable, and both groups refuse to be seen with metamorphicists. If you tell someone you're a paleomagnetologist, you'll be asked, "What kind?"

Despite their heterogeneity, scientists follow certain patterns of behavior. All use PowerPoint in their talks.

*Joel Achenbach is a Washington Post staff writer.*

They speak for 15 minutes, precisely. Unlike a political speech, a science talk never begins with a false note of self-deprecation or any attempt at humor whatsoever. Usually a scientist will speak in uber-jargon, which means the words must first be translated into jargon before the subsequent translation into ordinary language.

***Thousands of people were  
swallowed by the sea, and  
no one today would say that  
geophysics is an esoteric subject***

What happens in many sessions is that you go into a reverie, listening to the burble of a scientist, the words utterly incomprehensible but somehow reassuring, tumbling from the mountains of genius. The room is dark, and you remember fondly the days, decades ago, when after lunch you were permitted to lie down on your blanket and take a nap. The PowerPoint presentation shows yet another graph with dots arrayed around a curving line of allegedly tremendous significance. You never quite catch the units being used, or the time scale or the distance, and indeed the whole thing is three or four standard deviations from what you might actually be able to understand, but nonetheless you are pleased to hear that the data match the theory. People are figuring things out! They're paying attention! They understand what's going on! In your reverie you feel serene and safe, if tremendously stupid.

The individual presentations tend to take on very narrow slices of the universe. No one gives a talk titled "What's It All About?" Or: "Geophysics: The Big Picture." Or: "Our Friend, the Sun." No, here are the scintillating titles of some of the talks at the AGU meeting:

Excitation of Earth's Incessant Free Oscillations  
by Atmosphere-Ocean-Sea-floor Coupling.

Observations of Ion Velocity Space Holes  
Associated with Magnetic Field Fluctuations  
in the Plasma Sheet.

And here's a grabber:

Variable Nitrogen Isotope Effects Associated  
with N<sub>2</sub>O Isotopologue Production: Towards an  
Understanding of Denitrification Mechanism.

To the lay person it might seem pointless, but a better word would be pointillist. They are adding a little dot of datum to what slowly emerges as a coherent picture of the world.

One day during the convention, a geologist gave a talk about a subduction zone, a place where the plates of Earth's crust meet, off the coast of Sumatra. One plate is diving beneath another, lurching. The scientist said he

had warned the coastal residents of Sumatra that someday there would be a huge earthquake there and that it could create a deadly tsunami.

Less than two weeks later, the earth moved. The tectonic theory proved horribly correct. Thousands of people were swallowed by the sea, and no one today would say that geophysics is an esoteric subject.

But what is most tragic is that the collective genius of all these experts, combined with the sensors and satellite observations and seismographic data and all the other tools of science and technology, could not send the important message at the key moment: Run. Run for your lives. ■

*"An Earth-Shaking Experience: The Shocking Truth About Scientists," Washington Post, Jan. 30, 2005. ©2005, The Washington Post. Reprinted with permission.*



© 2004 USPS USED WITH PERMISSION ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

## COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS HONOR FOUR SCIENTISTS

On May 4, The Postal Service will issue will issue four 37-cent stamps honoring geneticist Barbara McClintock, mathematician John von Neumann, physicist Richard Feynman, and thermodynamicist Josiah Willard Gibbs. The American scientists are being recognized for their remarkable contributions to the field of science.

**Barbara McClintock** (1902-1992) discovered genetic transposition, the movement of genetic material within and between chromosomes. **John von Neumann** (1903-1957) made significant contributions in both pure and applied mathematics, especially in the areas of quantum mechanics, game theory, and computer theory and design. Physicist **Richard Feynman** (1918-1988) developed a new formulation of quantum theory based, in part, on diagrams he invented to help him visualize the dynamics of atomic particles. And **Josiah Willard Gibbs** (1839-1903), considered one of the greatest scientists of the 19th century, formulated the modern system of thermodynamic analysis. ■

*(Source: news release)*

## ADMINISTRATION VIEWS ON SCIENCE CONTINUE TO SPARK CONTROVERSY

by Chris Mooney

When it's your job to serve as the president's in-house expert on science and technology, being constantly in the media spotlight isn't necessarily a mark of distinction. But for President Bush's stoically inclined science adviser John Marburger, immense controversy followed his blanket dismissal last year of allegations (now endorsed by 48 Nobel laureates) that the administration has systematically abused science. So it was more than a little refreshing to hear Marburger take a strong stance against science politicization and abuse on one issue where it really matters: evolution.

Speaking at the annual conference of the National Association of Science Writers\*, Marburger fielded an audience question about "Intelligent Design" (ID), the latest supposedly scientific alternative to Charles Darwin's theory of descent with modification.

The White House's chief scientist stated point blank, "Intelligent Design is not a scientific theory." And that's not all. As if to ram the point home, Marburger soon continued, "I don't regard Intelligent Design as a scientific topic."

Marburger's words mark a departure for this administration. While campaigning for the presidency in 1999, then-Governor Bush stroked his religiously conservative followers by defending the teaching of creationism alongside evolution and stating, "I believe children ought to be exposed to different theories about how the world started." And in response to a question from *Science* magazine during the 2004 race, Bush's campaign ducked the ID issue by stating, "The federal government has no control over local curricula, and it is not the federal government's role to tell states and local boards of education what they should teach in the classroom."

In comparison with these statements, Marburger minced no words about the scientific status of ID. In

*Chris Mooney is a senior correspondent whose The American Prospect Online column appears each week. His book on the politicization of science will be published later this year by Basic Books. His daily blog and other writings can be found at [www.chrismooney.com](http://www.chrismooney.com).*

fact, GOP Intelligent Design boosters like Senator Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania (where a court case over ID is now pending) may be extremely miffed by Marburger's stance.

Alas, Marburger's forthrightness about ID wasn't matched by his discussion (or lack thereof) of charges that the Bush administration has systematically abused and distorted scientific information.

At the National Association of Science Writers session, Marburger shared the stage with Representative Henry Waxman, a Democrat who has relentlessly pursued and publicized allegations that the administration has interfered with the process by which scientific advice makes its way to policy makers. Speaking prior to Marburger, Waxman slammed the Bush administration for abuses ranging from the stacking of scientific advisory panels to monkeying with research on mercury pollution. The congressman also charged that Marburger's previously published rebuttal to charges of science abuse—delivered in response to a statement and report on the subject last year by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS)—amounted to "asserted denials with little supporting evidence."

When Marburger took the stage, he ignored Waxman's stark criticisms entirely, as if they somehow didn't merit addressing. Instead, the president's science adviser delivered a delightful speech about "four challenges" for science journalism. The disconnect was stunning, and generally continued throughout the question and answer session, during which Marburger dodged Waxman repeatedly.

In truth, Marburger's elusiveness may reflect considerable wisdom. Considering that new tales of Bush administration science abuse seem to pop up regularly, this probably isn't a debate he can win.

Just last week, in fact, some of the most stunning evidence yet emerged concerning the Bush administration's treatment of science and government scientists, courtesy of the UCS and the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER). At the center of the controversy was the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), a branch of the Interior Department charged with enforcement of the Endangered Species Act.

Determining how and whether to protect species necessarily depends on using scientific analyses to find out if they're in peril and what's causing the problem. And as now seems clear, the Bush FWS has repeatedly sought to doctor the data in order to prevent tougher

\*"Framing Science: Has Politics Taken Over the Direction of Scientific Research?" plenary session, 2005 NASW Conference, Washington, D.C. Moderator: Joe Palca, National Public Radio. Speakers: Rita Colwell, distinguished professor emerita, University of Maryland and (former) director, National Science Foundation; John H. Marburger III, director, United States Office of Science and Technology Policy; Congressman Henry Waxman, ranking minority member, House Government Reform Committee, and (member) House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

endangered-species protections that rankle various industry constituencies—development, ranching, mining, logging, and so on.

The UCS and PEER sent surveys about science politicization to more than a thousand FWS scientists, and received some 400 back. Almost half of the respondents reported that they had been “directed, for non-scientific reasons, to refrain from making [findings] that are protective of species.” One out of five added that they had been “directed to inappropriately exclude or alter technical information from a USFWS scientific document.” Half said they were aware of cases in which “commercial interests have inappropriately induced the reversal or withdrawal of scientific conclusions or decisions through political intervention.” And so on.

This is damning stuff, and reflects a clear sense among many government scientists that politics has corrupted the science-based endangered-species-protection process. Granted, it’s possible that every single one of these Fish and Wildlife Service survey respondents has an ax to grind. But it isn’t very likely.

Marburger wasn’t asked about these survey results. But given his consistency in defending the White House in the past, one suspects he would echo arguments already offered by the Interior Department—the agencies weren’t acting inappropriately, it’s OK for superiors to review the scientific conclusions of scientists working under them, this happens all the time, etc. Yawn.

Thank goodness that on evolution, at least, Marburger strays from the pack. ■

Chris Mooney, “*Intelligent Denials*,” *The American Prospect Online*, Feb 22, 2005. *With permission.*

## STORY “BALANCE” BLOWS UP IN JOURNAL’S FACE

by John Gever

Rebecca Renner, a veteran journalist and NASW member, was baffled when she opened the September 2002 issue of *Environmental Health Perspectives* and saw the article over her byline in its Science Selections section.

The topic was perchlorate, a rocket-fuel component whose human health effects are now hotly debated. Renner was asked to summarize a scientific paper appearing in that issue of *EHP*. The journal is published by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and carries original scientific reports as well as

*John Gever writes about business and medical technology from Morgantown, W.Va.*

journalist-written news stories on environmental chemicals’ health effects. The paper, from researchers at Oregon Health & Science University and a private consulting company called Intertox Inc., was a clinical study of perchlorate-laced drinking water on the adult human thyroid.

Her surprise came because what she was reading differed considerably from the article she’d submitted that June. *EHP*’s news editors hadn’t asked for revisions or told her they had problems with her draft. But, gone was context information she’d included about U.S. Environmental Protection Agency studies on perchlorate, which reached very different conclusions from those in the *EHP* paper. Gone was a line identifying the study’s sponsor, a manufacturers’ consortium called the Perchlorate Study Group.

She contacted her editor at *EHP*, Kimberly Thigpen Tart, to ask what happened. The response was that the deleted material didn’t fit within the Science Selections format, which, Tart explained, was supposed to be just a lay-language summary of the scientific paper. Information on study sponsors is also usually omitted from Science Selections.

Renner privately thought the published piece hadn’t done justice to the immensely controversial topic. Perchlorate contamination of water supplies, vegetables, and even mother’s milk is widespread. EPA is preparing to set legal limits on the allowable amount of perchlorate in drinking water. Based largely on animal studies, EPA staff have recommended a limit of one part per billion, which perchlorate manufacturers and their top customer, the U.S. military, have bitterly opposed.

But while Renner remained unhappy with the edits, she didn’t quarrel with Tart’s reply. “I chalked it up to experience and I moved on,” she said in a recent phone interview. She continued to write news stories for *EHP*, including Science Selections. Renner merely told Tart she wanted to see the edited copy before publication, which she hadn’t done before. The journal faithfully obliged.

That probably would have been the end of it, except for a reporter named David Danelski at the *Riverside* (Calif.) *Press-Enterprise*, a 200,000-circulation daily covering the “Inland Valley” west of Los Angeles. Danelski, an environment reporter for the paper, had been following the perchlorate controversy since 2003. Often working with *P-E* health writer Douglas Beeman, Danelski wrote some 20 articles about perchlorate—where it had been found, what its human effects might be, how it might be regulated.

By the fall of 2004, Danelski said recently by telephone, he and Beeman were investigating whether perchlorate manufacturers and Pentagon officials were playing dirty in trying to influence EPA’s rule making. “We found they lobbied the White House. In public comments to the EPA, they tried to discredit certain scientists,”

Danelski said. "There was more than science going on."

The reporters filed Freedom of Information Act requests for documents, yielding thousands of pages of mostly junk. Danelski then started looking at legal papers from a civil suit filed by some California residents who had been exposed to perchlorate. "I'm in the courthouse, and I find a document saying a lawyer [for the plaintiffs] had subpoenaed records from the Perchlorate Study Group," Danelski said. The law firm wouldn't let him see the records, but a confidential source told him they included a document that would interest him.

---

***Gone was a line identifying  
the study's sponsor,  
a manufacturers'  
consortium called the  
Perchlorate Study Group.***

---

Danelski eventually obtained the document—he won't say how, except that it came through "basic shoe-leather reporting"—and it looked like the smoking gun he'd been seeking. It described an industry consultant, paid by the Perchlorate Study Group, being allowed to edit a journalist-written news article before it was published in a leading environmental health journal.

Indeed, the news article was Renner's, the consultant was Gay Goodman of Intertox, second author of the *EHP* scientific paper, and the document was a justification of invoices from Intertox to the Perchlorate Study Group. About the Renner article, it said, "The first version of the news article presented to Intertox demonstrated a lack of understanding of the article's implications and was potentially very damaging to PSG. Dr. Goodman gained the trust of the editor and, through a cooperative process entailing five or more drafts, provided substantial and critical improvements to the article."

Danelski published a story Dec. 19 based on the document, along with reactions from Renner, *EHP*'s news editors, and Goodman. It appeared as a smallish sidebar to a 3,900-word article on the intersection of science, industry, and politics in the perchlorate controversy.

The Intertox document appeared damning, but in fact Goodman's involvement was in line with established *EHP* policies on news section articles.

In a phone interview, *EHP* news editor Tart said the journal has always sent out all news section stories to scientists for review. This process is handled in the editorial office, rather than by the individual writers. In the case of Science Selections, they were sent to the papers' authors. "Originally we asked authors of the papers to write them," she said, but since their writing skills varied, the journal began assigning them to professional writers.

Tart added that all of the changes were in line with

*EHP*'s format for Science Selections. She attributed the deletions from Renner's submission to "in-house editing." The Intertox document, she said, exaggerated Goodman's role.

Nevertheless, when Danelski told *EHP* about the Intertox invoice document, the journal changed its policy. *EHP* is now sending Science Selection articles to independent scientific reviewers rather than the subject paper's authors. It also issued a statement saying it may convene "an international meeting to address complex questions associated with ethics in publishing in the fields of environmental and public health."

As for Intertox's financial ties to the Perchlorate Study Group, Goodman said (in written replies to questions), "There was no prior arrangement with the Perchlorate Study Group to pay for my review of the news article." She didn't say whether Intertox was actually paid or not. In any event, at the time the paper was submitted for publication, *EHP* did not require a formal disclosure of competing financial interests. "The issues that have been raised about my participation in the review of the news article are, fundamentally, issues about *EHP*'s editorial policy," she wrote.

Tart said she was "appalled that someone would expect to be paid" for reviewing a news story. Nevertheless, she said, had she known about the invoicing. "I don't think it would have changed our process."

In a letter to *EHP* sent after Danelski's revelations, two staffers for the Natural Resources Defense Council attacked the journal's overall policy of outside review for news section articles. *EHP*, they said, should instead "rely on the expertise of its editorial staff and news reporters, with limited use of outside reviewers for accuracy checks only."

Colin Norman, news editor at the journal *Science*, said he encourages his writers to have difficult material checked by outside experts, but emphasized that the writers manage it themselves. Asked about *EHP*'s system in which editors handle it, he replied flatly, "That would never happen here."

Tart defended *EHP*'s review policy as adding "balance" to *EHP*'s news coverage. Outside reviewers, she said, often "raise issues we may not see."

She also insisted that *EHP* does rely on the professionalism of its writers. "We don't just take wholesale what the reviewers say," she said. "There's always a back and forth with the writer."

When it was pointed out there was no back and forth with Renner, Tart was silent for a long moment. Finally she said, "Rebecca wrote beyond the scope of what was asked of her. That's probably why we didn't feel it was necessary to go back to consult with her."

When she first learned from Danelski what had happened with her article, Renner was outraged. "Gay Goodman, who is on the payroll of the Perchlorate



Study Group, essentially got to rewrite a story about her own manuscript and run it under my name," she told him, a quote that appeared in his article.

However, there are no evident hard feelings between Renner and *EHP*. After Danelski's story appeared, the journal offered her another news assignment and she took it. In a recent interview she blamed herself for part of what happened. When she saw that the *EHP* paper she was asked to write about seemed one-sided, "I should have called them up and said, guys, this isn't a Science Selections piece, this is a full blown news story," she said. "That would have solved the problem."

She also said she didn't know about the author review. Her advice to other writers: "When you take an assignment, be absolutely clear... know the procedures your client follows. It matters, it's not just minutiae." ■

## THE BLOOM ON SEED MAGAZINE IS FADING

by Gabriel Sherman



The debut issue of *Seed* sparked interest among science writers—in more ways than one.

When *Seed* magazine hit New York in 2002, then 21-year-old founder Adam Bly was prone to evangelize about building up his new-wave science title's brand. The glossy, which had sprouted a year earlier in Montreal, gave Bly—a McGill University dropout who had studied at Canada's National Research Council at age 16—plenty to preach about: Its long-form science pieces were coupled with visual spreads

that owed more to Prada than to *Popular Science*. The D.J.-fueled launch party was at the Chelsea nightclub Eyebeam Atelier; the roster of writers soon grew to include Pulitzer winners Laurie Garrett and Jared Diamond and *Atlantic Monthly* correspondent Ellen Ruppel Shell.

What Bly, who is also the magazine's editor in chief, has had trouble with lately has been putting out the actual magazine. *Seed* attracted high-profile advertisers, including Skyy vodka, Johnnie Walker Black, Ford, and Volkswagen, and won the 2004 Utne

*Gabriel Sherman is a columnist for the New York Observer.*

Independent Press Award for its science and technology coverage. But the magazine only published four times last year and hasn't brought out a new issue since September.

Bly said that he has recently secured new investor capital that should put the magazine on solid financial footing. "We have begun to close a major round of financing that we have been working on for several months," Bly said in a recent phone conversation.

"I think from Day One when you launch an independent magazine, your chances of success are such that you're heading for the dustbin," Bly continued. "From Day One, you're short on capital and you're doing everything you can to navigate a complex industry—and certainly an industry that doesn't favor independent magazines that are trying to do something different."

Bly declined to comment on the identity of his investors. Sources familiar with the proceedings said the Walnut Group, a New York-and-Cincinnati-based venture-capital firm, is among the investors considering a deal.

"We're still looking at [*Seed*]," said Nicole Methena, an associate with the Walnut Group. "We don't have a time frame right now. We're working with the company. ... There's been no investment decision by Walnut at this point to make an investment, or not make it."

Bly wouldn't comment on the Walnut Group, but he said that when the deal closes, it will be an "eight-figure round" from "a mix of institutional and private [investors]," and that the deal should be complete by the end of the month. That's the same time, Bly said, that the winter issue—on hold since December—will hit newsstands, and the magazine will finish bringing its functions, including the printing, down from Montreal.

For *Seed*'s freelancers, the cash infusion will be welcome news. Last week, the magazine began mailing checks out to a group of freelance writers who had spent months battling *Seed* over delinquent payments. The freelancers said *Seed* failed to furnish checks for pieces that had closed as far back as last spring—even while assigning new pieces and bringing on new writers—and that the magazine stonewalled their efforts to get paid.

"As a science writer, I'd love nothing more than this magazine to succeed," said Rebecca Skloot, who writes regularly for *The New York Times Magazine* and *Popular Science*. "In 10 years as a freelance writer, I have never had payment problems like the ones I'm having with *Seed*." Skloot said she finally received a check on Feb. 12. "I don't consider myself paid," she added, "until it clears the bank."

After *Seed* sent out an e-mail advertisement seeking writers to the 2,300 members of the National Association of Science Writers this past fall, complaints about the ad from unpaid NASW members prompted

the association to announce that it was investigating *Seed's* payment history.

The American Society of Journalists and Authors, meanwhile, had put *Seed* on its warning list and included the magazine in its *Contracts Watch* newsletter, circulated to more than 15,000 writers.

"*Seed* is an exciting new magazine, but it is unconscionable for a magazine not to pay writers in a timely manner," ASJA executive director Brett Harvey said in an e-mail.

In December, ASJA delivered a registered letter to *Seed* on behalf of five writers who claimed to be owed a combined \$25,000. "All of those payments are past due, some five months overdue," wrote the organization's grievance committee chair, Jim Morrison. "We understand that while you are unable to pay writers, you continue to solicit queries and assign stories to writers unaware of your problems. That is outrageous."

—  
*...the magazine only  
 published four times last year  
 and hasn't brought out a new  
 issue since September.*  
 —

Bly responded on Dec. 23 in an e-mail to ASJA, writing, "We are a new publication and as such, we face periodic cash flow strains that make it impossible to issue any payments."

Writers who'd been wrangling with *Seed* about overdue payments received an e-mail last week from the magazine that said checks were being issued. On Feb. 12, freelancer Dan Ferber, a member of the five writers being represented by the ASJA, received a check for \$1,000.

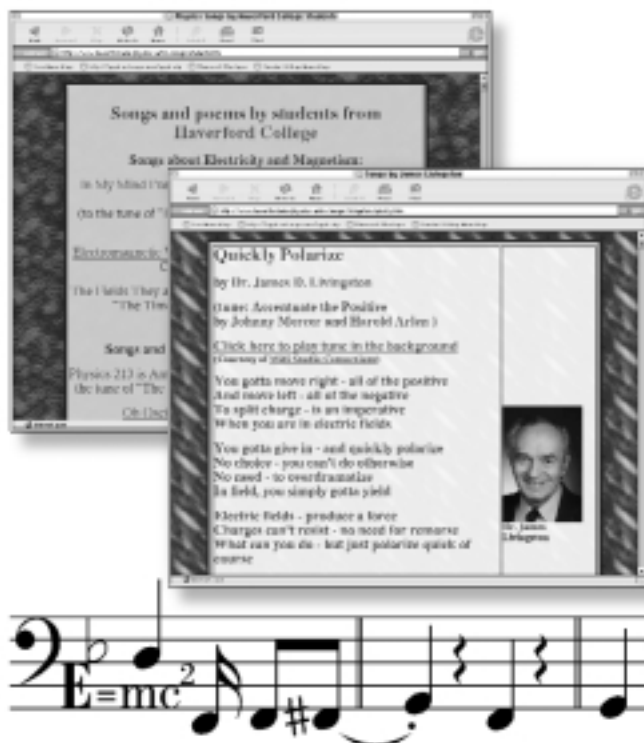
"In seven years of full-time freelancing, I never had to wait so long to get paid and never had this much trouble," he said.

Another writer said he'd received payment via wire transfer. Bly said all remaining payments to writers would be complete by the end of the month. Laura van Dam, the current NASW president, said *Seed* had issued her a statement saying all NASW members had been paid except one. On Feb. 15, the NASW board took up the *Seed* issue at its annual board meeting held at the National Academy of Sciences, in Washington, D.C.

"Freelancers are being paid .... We actually started that cycle this week, so most of them will be repaid by the end of this month," Bly said.

"This is an industry, unfortunately, where there are louder freelancers than others," Bly said. "So, you know, you might be hearing from the louder ones." ■

*TheFrontPage* (column), New York Observer, Feb. 21, 2005.



## HUMMING A HAPPY PHYSICS TUNE

by Christopher Conkey

Six years ago, Walter Smith, as associate professor of physics at Haverford College, whipped out a baritone ukulele and played a tune he wrote about 19th-century Danish physicist Hans Christian Oersted to a puzzled class of undergraduates. Since then, he has composed and performed 34 other songs about relativity, magnetism, and wave oscillation. He also made a startling discovery: He isn't alone.

It turns out that quite a few physicists like to dabble in ditties. Dr. Smith has heard from people like James Livingston, a professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology who wrote "Our Ferromagnetic Love," to the tune of "That Old Black Magic," and Lynda Williams, a professor at Santa Rosa (Calif.) Junior College who performs a smoky cabaret review as "The Physics Chanteuse."

He received a trove of songs from the family of Dr. Arthur Roberts, a piano-playing nuclear physicist at the center of a group of World War II-era nuclear scientists, who died last year at age 91. Dr. Roberts's canon

*Christopher Conkey is a staff reporter for the Wall Street Journal.*

includes "Pentagon Polka" and "The Cyclotronist's Nightmare (or Eighty Millicuries by Half-Past Nine)." Unlike Dr. Smith, Dr. Roberts played his songs only in social settings. Dr. Smith says Dr. Roberts's songs were "meant to be amusements at physics department parties and picnics."

Today, Dr. Smith is at the center of an expanding universe of physics music. His tunes have inspired students and colleagues to compose music of their own. His Web site, [www.physicssongs.org](http://www.physicssongs.org), has become a song-swapping network of physicists looking for musical ideas to enliven and simplify lessons.

Dr. Smith's foray into physics songs started in 1999 when he was struggling to "inject some pep" into a freshmen electromagnetism class. "I felt sometimes that the students were starting to zone out a little bit," says Dr. Smith, a bearded profession given to turtle-necks.

He and his wife, former choir singers who rekindled a traditional acappella group at their Philadelphia-area church, came up with a ditty called "The Oersted Song," which is sung to the tune of "Get Out' the Way for Old Dan Tucker," an old campfire folk song. It was an attempt to make students laugh while celebrating the man whose discoveries led to modern electric-powered technologies. It begins:

Hans Christian Oested was a fine old Dane  
He had magnets on the brain  
He loved them all from pole to pole  
Cut 'em in half but they were still whole.

When he played the song in class for the first time, the reaction was lukewarm. But after performing it for a different class in 2001, students started singing along.

"We were blown away that he'd written a song," says Jamie Diorio, a student in engineering and now a graduate student in engineering at the University of Maryland. Encouraged, Dr. Smith says he churned out 12 new songs that year with his wife's help.

A few students even caught the songwriting bug. Diorio joined with two classmates to compose "Physics 213 is Amazing," to the music of Bob Dylan's "The Times They Are A-Changing."

"I realize this all sounds pretty geeky," Diorio says, recalling he once asked an electronic music-savvy classmate later that year "Can we maybe do a techno remix of one of Walter's songs?" The strange result, "Oh Oscillators," is now on Dr. Smith's Web site.

Some of the songs on the site are set to folk music, others to hip hop. One link leads to a spoof on Dr. Stephen Hawking that proclaims the spoof character, MC Hawking, is the "undisputed king of theoretical gangsta astrophysics." There are even adapted Christmas carols, like "Phrosty the Photon," sung to

"Frosty the Snowman."

"All songs about physics are funny," says Dr. Smith, who hopes the National Science Foundation will provide him with funding to expand the site. "I don't think it's possible to write a serious one." The foundation has given similar funding in the past: Priscilla Laws, a research professor at Dickinson College got partial NSF funding for the album "Physics Pholk Songs."

He argues that physics songs help students "build a richer 'knowledge tree'" and help teachers "establish an informal classroom atmosphere in which even shy students are willing to ask questions."

Many of Dr. Smith's songs deify legendary physicists. Some contain famous equations. Other envision a peace-loving, physics-obsessed world to come. "Physics Utopia" does all three:

...Our children will sign it in chorus—  
Circulation of vector cap E,  
Yes they'll sing as they march on before us,  
Equals negative d by dt...

Some songs have melodies based on classics, such as Dr. Livingston's "My Favorite Materials," sung to the tune of "My Favorite Things." The site also offers tips on how to use songs in class—other than singing them—which include reading the lyrics as poems and asking students to write songs.

Katie Baratz, 20, a Haverford sophomore who took a class with Dr. Smith last year, credits the songs with helping her retain complex equations. For her final project, she even wrote a song of her own, "In My Mind, I've Got Physics Equations," sung to the tune of James Taylor's "Carolina on My Mind."

"A friend of mine had heard about the Web site and said, 'Weird, why are you on this?'" she says. "It sounds really nerdy but we had fun with physics." ■

*"It's all Relative: Songs to Make Physics Easier,"* Wall Street Journal, March 17, 2005.

### ScienceWriters welcomes letters to the editor

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

Send to Editor, *ScienceWriters*, P.O. Box 1725 Solana Beach, CA 92075, fax 858-793-1144, or e-mail [lfriedmann@nasw.org](mailto:lfriedmann@nasw.org).

## A PEEK INSIDE SCIENCE LOBBYING

by Katie Walter

Here are some numbers to keep in mind if you ever lobby a member of the U.S. House of Representatives:

\$10,000  
110,000  
7

According to Francis Slakey, a lobbyist with the American Physical Society, every representative has to raise **\$10,000** every week in order to mount a reelection bid for a House seat (an average of \$1.1 million per campaign). Claiming victory requires winning at least **110,000** votes. The last number, **7 minutes**, is the average time available to deal with anyone in a legislator's office, whether by e-mail, fax, phone, or a face-to-face visit.

In other words, money and votes talk, and time is short. Lobbyists who represent major contributors or a block of voters get the attention. Slakey acknowledged ruefully that because the American Physical Society cannot deliver either money or votes, the time he gets with politicians is typically very brief. For those of us from outside the Beltway, Slakey's words, and those of other panelists in a science lobbying workshop\* at this year's NASW national conference, confirmed our worst fears.

---

***Lobbyists who represent major contributors or a block of voters get the attention.***

---

Lobbying is recognized in the U.S. Constitution under the right of redress, according to Julius Hobson, a lobbyist for the American Medical Association. He agreed that lobbying is all about money, but it is also about ensuring protection for individuals, organizations, and important causes. He told the story of Microsoft,

*Katie Walter is a science writer at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.*

which had one lobbyist and a secretary in Washington, D.C., until the company had trouble with the Justice Department. Now they spend upwards of \$1 million every year on lobbying.

---

***For those of us from outside the Beltway...[it] confirmed our worst fears.***

---

But the session also included advice for science writers, from long-time lobbyists and Washington insiders. In addition to Slakey and Hobson, the panel included lobbyist Robert Park (moderator), of the American Physical Society, and veteran science reporter Daniel S. Greenberg.

Greenberg believes that a major neglected story is the organizations that science lobbyists represent. "The mainstream press sees science lobbying as sandbox lobbying and so doesn't give it penetrating coverage," he said. He encouraged writers to examine scientific societies and the action behind the scenes of such lauded publications as *Science* or the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

When asked what advice the panel had for reporters trying to assess government's impact on science issues, Greenberg recommended looking for "the guys who are mad." Hobson encouraged writers to go beyond the usual suspects for quotes. Drill down and find the people who do the work.

Another question about getting the public more involved in science led Park to quickly respond, "Write interesting stories!" All panel members agreed that some subjects are not as easy to cover as the Mars Rover or prescription drugs, both of which grab the public's attention. Greenberg suggested doing retrospective stories about research projects. With the government funding most science research, the public deserves to know what they got for their money.

Ah, back to money. Slakey completed his talk with a quote from Mark Twain, "We have the best government money can buy." ■

*\*Science Lobbying: Watch Out for Special and Conflicting Interests, was held Feb. 16, 2005, Cafritz Conference Center, George Washington University, Washington, D.C. Organizers: William Sweet, senior news editor, IEEE Spectrum; and Brian Vastag, correspondent, Journal of the American Medical Association.*



## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

by Laura van Dam

During our national conference this past February, because the wide hallways were at times jam-packed with the 500 attendees, I found traveling from room to room required plenty of smiling plus fancy foot and shoulder work. Sometimes I just stopped and looked at the crowd in delight. What a metaphor those images now bring to my mind about our thriving organization.



PHOTO BY HOWARD SANNER

We have been a vigorous group for decades, observed long-time members Cristine Russell, Lewis Cope, and Warren Leary. The ways volunteers worked on NASW concerns in the 1970s and 1980s may differ from the methods constantly used now, of course—instead of gathering around kitchen tables, we frequently barrage each other with e-mails. But the spirit remains the same. Members volunteering—along with the steady guidance and wisdom of Executive Director Diane McGurgan, and the paid work done by just a few other people—is what makes our organization strong.

I encourage you to take an active part in NASW matters, and to discover the camaraderie and new skills that can prepare you to take on future leadership roles in our organization. In the offing, you will help NASW fulfill its important mission: [To] foster the professional interests of science writers and the dissemination of accurate information concerning science, technology, the interpretations of science, and the role of science in society.

Need some ideas on how to become involved? We currently have seven committees covering awards, education, FOIA, freelance, Internet services, membership, and workshops. A complete list and contact information for NASW committees can be found on page two of every issue of *ScienceWriters*. Committee members consistently contribute innovative ideas.

New initiatives are also under development. For example, board member Tom Paulson is spearheading an effort to forge greater ties among the growing number of regional science-writing groups (many of which are run by NASW volunteers). Curt Suplee and Sally Squires are heading an ad hoc group to explore how NASW might develop programs for editors, publishers,

*Freelance writer and editor Laura van Dam began a two-year term as NASW president on Jan. 1, 2005. She can be reached at [lvandam@nasw.org](mailto:lvandam@nasw.org).*

and other writers about the value and importance of accurate, compelling science writing. They would welcome your ideas and energy.

More ideas on how to volunteer could surface when you check out the minutes of the February 2005 membership meeting (see page 14) that outlines NASW goals for the coming year. And if you have a story idea or tip you think will help your colleagues in their professional careers, pitch it to *ScienceWriters*.

A major effort that will involve plenty of volunteers over the next several months is our annual conference. Since we are changing the timing of that event so it will occur independently of a scientific meeting, NASW's next conference will take place Oct. 22-24, 2005. To be held in combination with CASW's New Horizons in Science briefings (Oct. 24-26), in Pittsburgh, the theme of the NASW conference is Science in Society. The workshops will include three tracks: the craft of writing, the business of freelancing, and skills critical to PIOs. Send topic and speaker ideas to NASW Vice President Robert Lee Hotz, who chairs the workshop committee.

---

***I encourage you to  
take an active part  
in NASW matters,  
and to discover the  
camaraderie and  
new skills that can  
prepare you to take on  
future leadership roles  
in our organization.***

---

Lee is also looking for volunteers to help put together our Feb. 2006 meeting, in St. Louis. That will focus specifically on mentoring and other programs concerned with the professional development of newer science writers. In this way, NASW will retain a presence at the AAAS annual meeting.

It is fitting to end this letter on volunteering by giving special thanks to immediate past NASW President Deborah Blum. Her inspired leadership, wisdom, gentle humor, and steadfast resolve have led to NASW's independent annual conference and closer ties with other journalism organizations—both national and international. She has helped NASW play an ever more crucial role in the world of science writing. We all owe Deborah—a volunteer *extraordinaire*—our gratitude. ■

**BUDGET REPORT**

|                                  | 2004<br>Proposed  | 2004<br>Actual    | 2005<br>Proposed  |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Income</b>                    |                   |                   |                   |
| Dues                             | \$ 170,000        | \$ 167,100        | \$ 170,000        |
| Labels                           | 16,500            | 19,970            | 18,000            |
| Ads/Online & Newsletter          | 9,000             | 13,742            | 12,000            |
| Unrealized Gain                  | 0                 | 4,494             | 2,200             |
| Misc. Income                     | 0                 | 226               | 250               |
| Bank Interest                    | 900               | 596               | 596               |
| <b>Subtotal</b>                  | <b>\$ 196,400</b> | <b>\$ 206,128</b> | <b>\$ 203,046</b> |
| <b>Special Sources</b>           |                   |                   |                   |
| Dividends /Investments           | \$ 0              | \$ 526            | \$ 526            |
| CD Interest                      | 1,710             | 1,292             | 1,300             |
| CASW Grant                       | 3,000             | 3,000             | 3,000             |
| Comm. Sci. News booklet          | 150               | 73                | 0                 |
| NASW Banquet                     | 17,800            | 18,990            | 13,014            |
| Banquet in Pittsburgh            | 0                 | 0                 | 10,000            |
| SW Field Guide                   | 6,200             | 4,394             | 5,000             |
| Workshops                        | 35,000            | 45,824            | 51,440            |
| Workshops in Pittsburgh          | 0                 | 0                 | 25,000            |
| Authors Coalition                | 40,000            | 58,018            | 52,000            |
| <b>Subtotal</b>                  | <b>\$ 103,860</b> | <b>\$ 132,117</b> | <b>\$ 161,280</b> |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>              | <b>\$ 300,260</b> | <b>\$ 338,245</b> | <b>\$ 364,326</b> |
| <b>Expenses</b>                  |                   |                   |                   |
| Exec. Dir. Payroll               | \$ 42,000         | \$ 42,000         | \$ 42,000         |
| Taxes & Benefits                 | 12,000            | 11,935            | 12,000            |
| Exec. Dir. T&E                   | 4,400             | 3,080             | 2,500             |
| Newsletter Production            | 39,000            | 28,292            | 40,000            |
| Editor                           | 20,000            | 20,000            | 20,000            |
| Awards                           | 16,000            | 13,850            | 15,000            |
| Roster                           | 12,300            | 10,200            | 12,000            |
| Office Expenses Misc.            | 1,800             | 383               | 1,000             |
| Accountant Fee                   | 4,100             | 4,100             | 5,000             |
| Postage                          | 6,000             | 4,946             | 5,300             |
| Supplies                         | 1,000             | 987               | 1,000             |
| Telephone                        | 2,400             | 2,400             | 2,400             |
| Printing                         | 7,000             | 5,305             | 4,200             |
| Depreciation                     | 500               | 353               | 0                 |
| Corporate Taxes                  | 500               | 400               | 400               |
| Authors Coalition                | 26,597            | 22,449            | 42,000            |
| Bank Charges                     | 4,500             | 3,385             | 4,000             |
| Check and payroll services       | 550               | 457               | 500               |
| Computer Support                 | 2,000             | 1,688             | 500               |
| <b>Subtotal</b>                  | <b>\$ 202,647</b> | <b>\$ 176,210</b> | <b>\$ 209,800</b> |
| <b>Special Projects</b>          |                   |                   |                   |
| L Groups                         | \$ 1,000          | \$ 200            | \$ 1,000          |
| Cybrarian                        | 10,500            | 14,417            | 16,000            |
| Web Hosting                      | 0                 | 0                 | 1,500             |
| Web site Redesign                | 2,000             | 0                 | 10,000            |
| Bd. Travel (D.C. & Pitt)         | 12,000            | 11,979            | 22,500            |
| SW Field Guide                   | 30,000            | 46,937            | 3,000             |
| Workshop Symposia                | 53,000            | 56,707            | 55,258            |
| Workshops in Pittsburgh          | 0                 | 0                 | 25,000            |
| Banquet Outlays                  | 15,000            | 26,394            | 17,788            |
| Banquet in Pittsburgh            | 0                 | 0                 | 10,000            |
| Diane McGurgan Award             | 500               | 846               | 850               |
| Ins. (Bd. Liability/Work. Comp.) | 0                 | 3,342             | 3,350             |
| Misc. Unity Meeting              | 0                 | 2,359             | 0                 |
| Dues-WFSJ                        | 0                 | 300               | 300               |
| <b>Subtotal</b>                  | <b>\$ 124,000</b> | <b>\$ 163,481</b> | <b>\$ 166,546</b> |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>            | <b>\$ 326,647</b> | <b>\$ 339,691</b> | <b>\$ 376,346</b> |

**2005 NASW  
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP  
MEETING MINUTES**

by NASW Secretary Mariette DiChristina

An estimated 80 NASW members attended the news-filled annual membership and business meeting on Feb. 16, 2005, in the Cafritz Conference Center, at George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

The meeting commenced shortly after 5 p.m. with NASW President Laura van Dam thanking the board, immediate past President Deborah Blum, committee members, staff and volunteers for their efforts in making this year's NASW workshops the best-attended ever. This, NASW's first, freestanding national conference, was held just prior to the AAAS annual meeting.

Laura welcomed new and reelected board members and announced that Carol Ezzell Webb is stepping down from the office of treasurer because she will soon become the full-time mother of twins. Carol remains on the board as a member at large. Robert Lee Hotz, vice president and president-elect, will assume treasurer's duties for the balance of 2005.

In the first of several surprise announcements, Nancy Shute (chair) and Corrina Wu of the Membership Committee were named recipients of the Diane McGurgan Service Award, in recognition of their outstanding work in creating a booth at the Unity Conference—the world's largest gathering of journalists of color.

Next, it was AAAS director of public programs Ginger Pinholster's turn to offer warm thanks—and a "smoking pair" of Ferragamo shoes—to Lynne Friedmann upon the conclusion of Lynne's 10 years of service as a freelance consultant in charge of moderating

*Mariette DiChristina is executive editor of Scientific American.*

**BUDGET SUMMARY**

|                               |                   |                    |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Bank Report                   | 12/31/2003        | 12/31/2004         |
| Savings                       | \$ 1,402          | \$ 1,411           |
| Money Market Account          | 81,655            | 39,823             |
| CDs                           | 112,286           | 113,578            |
| Mutual Funds                  | 35,102            | 61,035             |
| Cash                          | 18,278            | 4,800              |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>           | <b>\$ 248,723</b> | <b>\$ 220,647</b>  |
| <b>2004 Total Income</b>      |                   | <b>\$ 338,245</b>  |
| <b>2004 Total Expenses</b>    |                   | <b>\$ 339,691</b>  |
| <b>2004 Net (Loss)</b>        |                   | <b>(\$ 1,446)</b>  |
| <b>2005 Proposed Income</b>   |                   | <b>\$ 364,326</b>  |
| <b>2005 Proposed Expenses</b> |                   | <b>\$ 376,346</b>  |
| <b>2005 Net (Loss)</b>        |                   | <b>(\$ 12,020)</b> |

the AAAS Annual Meeting news briefings.

On a sorrowful note, Laura announced that the much beloved Howard Lewis, long-time editor of *ScienceWriters*, passed away at the end of last year. In his memory, people may mail donations c/o Diane McGurgan who will forward them to two charities selected by the Lewis family.

Workshop coordinator Tinsley Davis and dozens of volunteers received a hearty round of applause for this year's workshops programs, which included 13 sessions, 37 speakers, on topics ranging from heady issues such as politics in science to the workaday essentials of the science-writing craft. The workshops drew a record 507 attendees. Two field trips the day before were also fully subscribed. Tinsley continues as coordinator for the next workshops, in Oct. 2005.

Jeff Grabmeier and John Travis, co-chairs of the Education Committee, reported the mentoring program matched 23 aspiring science writers with veterans for an insightful day during the AAAS annual meeting. Terry Devitt reported that 14 organizations had signed up for the annual Internship Fair that weekend, and that he was expecting 40 to 50 students to take advantage of the opportunity to interview for positions.

Glennnda Chui (chair) and new board member Tom Paulson of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Committee reported the group's activities this past year included setting up a joint listserv with the Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ) and the Society of Health Journalists (SHJ) to facilitate discussions and decisions with NASW on issues of shared concern. NASW, SEJ, and SHJ were among an unprecedented 4,600 individual journalists and organizations that signed petitions to support reporters' rights to protect their sources. In September, NASW joined SEJ in protesting a proposal that would restrict the release of satellite images to the press and public. In July, NASW, SEJ and SHJ wrote a letter objecting to the requirement that members of 27 friendly nations must obtain special visas in order to enter the United States. In May, NASW and SEJ protested an OMB proposal that would have changed peer-review procedures, putting undue control over scientific findings in the hands of the White House.

Freelance Committee chair Dan Ferber thanked past chair Kathryn Brown for her work with this active group and Richard Robinson for his efforts on the Just-for-Freelance section of the NASW Web site, which includes pages on negotiating contracts, creating successful queries, and more. A database about pay rates is currently under development. Among upcoming projects: a means to provide advice on contracts or other legal issues, articles on tax issues and other matters that concern freelancers, and help with grievances.

Kelli Whitlock, who with Mariette DiChristina co-chairs the Internet Committee, thanked cybrarian

Craig Hicks, who came on board in April, and backup cybrarian A'ndrea Elyse Messer, for their work over the past year with our Internet service provider NICAR/IRE. Craig and A'ndrea worked diligently to minimize service interruptions through software problems, hardware upgrades, and staff transitions. After a number of bumpy weeks in early 2004, the Internet services have now been problem free for months. Kelli said that groundwork for a Web site redesign began last fall with a membership survey that drew 268 responses (see *ScienceWriters* Fall/Winter 2004-05). Guided by the survey results, the committee is drafting an RFP for a Web designer.

Nancy Shute provided further details about the Membership Committee's work at the Unity Conference, held in Aug. 2004, in Washington, D.C. NASW volunteers prepared four helpful tip sheets for reporters who don't normally cover science as a beat, manned the booth for four days, and arranged for three top minority science writers to speak at the booth: Edwin Chen of the *Los Angeles Times*; Diedtra Henderson (then of the Associated Press), and Warren Leary of the *New York Times*. The committee seeks suggestions on where it should direct its efforts next.

Jon Franklin's ad hoc working group dealing with new forms of publishing recommends that NASW post various online resources and information concerning new publishing opportunities. Author's Coalition money might be available for such member services (see Budget Report at left).

Interactions with the Council of National Journalism Organizations, which brings together some 50 national news and editorial associations, gave Laura ideas about how to improve NASW's outreach efforts, fundraising, conference topics, FOI matters, diversity, and long-range planning. Laura and Deborah Blum represented NASW at the fourth World Conference for Science Journalists, in Montreal, attended by 700 journalists. At the conference, many sought out Laura and Deb for advice on how to support science writing. Deborah represents NASW as liaison to the World Federation of Science Journalists.

Laura announced that new board member Tom Paulson will serve as a liaison to regional science-writer groups, in an effort to support their efforts to build local science-writing communities.

Laura advised members that the board recently hired an attorney to send a strongly worded letter to *Seed* magazine following evidence that the publication is withholding payment to writers while at the same time seeking to advertise through nasw-jobs for other freelance writers. The letter puts NASW on record that it stands behind its members and will not accept *Seed* ads until the magazine pays its authors. The matter is yet to be resolved and the board is prepared to pursue further if necessary.

As the NASW workshops move to the fall, the Science-in-Society Awards moves with them. However, due to a short time frame during this transition year, the board decided the next SIS Awards will be presented at the NASW annual meeting, in Oct. 2006. This means a one-time eligibility extension for entrants (June 1, 2004 through Dec. 31, 2005) for that judging cycle. The new SIS Award co-chairs are Bob Finn and Jon Franklin.

An ad hoc task force headed by board members Sally Squires and Curt Suplee will explore ideas to improve NASW outreach to the editorial community. At a time when newspapers and magazines are laying off staff science writers and the profession is experiencing growth in the number of freelance writers and public information practitioners, NASW is in a position to take the lead in providing editors and publishers with bottom-line reasons why they should continue to have science coverage in their publications. NASW can also be a resource to narrative journalists, business writers, and municipal reporters who don't think of themselves as science writers, but clearly are writing on topics related to science. The ultimate goal is better science writing.

Lee presented the budget overview (see page 14 for budget details). In 2005 we will dip into savings for about \$12,000—roughly the difference in cost of having two annual meetings and workshops in the same calendar year, as we make the transition to a fall national conference prior to the CASW New Horizons Briefings.

This announcement formed a natural segue for Lee to discuss the October workshops. He recalled the workshops' humble beginnings, in 1995 in Atlanta. Since then, the program has grown in size and importance so that this year's meeting had the clout to draw the science advisor to the President of the United States as a plenary speaker. NASW will now partner with CASW by juxtaposing two important professional-development meetings. The NASW conference, self-supporting as fee-based, will be held two days prior to the free-of-charge CASW's New Horizons in Science Briefings. Like the meetings, the finances for organizing each will be separate.

NASW plans to retain a smaller, more focused presence during AAAS. The idea is to take advantage of the education efforts that are already underway and, in so doing, to help continue to nurture the science-writing community of the future.

Discussion turned to the Authors Coalition funds. Lee reported NASW received \$58,000 in 2004, and is obligated to spend the money within a year. The funding comes to NASW through fees collected in Europe for reproduction of articles, and the amount varies from year to year. Author Coalition liaison Beryl Benderly is gathering ideas for how to best use the windfall to benefit freelance members, operating within coalition-imposed spending guidelines.

The meeting adjourned about 6:30 p.m. ■

## CYBERBEAT

by Craig Hicks

As many of you know, this is my last cybrarian column for *ScienceWriters*.

The ending of this chapter in my working life is bittersweet. During the past 12 months, this job has been a great opportunity to help an organization that is very close to my heart and to regularly interact with many more of my NASW colleagues.

At the same time, my freelance business has grown far beyond my expectations, with commitments now totaling more than 40 working hours per week. As you can imagine, this has made it increasingly difficult for me to put in the amount and quality of time needed to fully support NASW's online community.

Enter Russell Clemings. A longtime NASW member and reporter for the *Fresno Bee*, Clemings took the helm in early April. He brings a wealth of experience to the job, having served as volunteer cybrarian for the Society for Environmental Journalists (SEJ) from 1994-2000.

In fact, he started SEJ's Web site in late 1994 and managed two site redesigns for the organization. He also has experience working with NASW's Internet service provider, IRE/NICAR—the same outfit that hosts the SEJ site.

A reporter for the *Fresno Bee* since 1984, Clemings covers regional planning, growth and development issues, and does computer-assisted reporting. He's a graduate of Northwestern University, a former Alicia Patterson Foundation Fellow, and has received numerous awards for his writing and reporting. Welcome, Russ.

As my next life chapter begins, I plan to stay involved with NASW as both a volunteer and member—and to a continued role in building our virtual community of science writers through participation in NASW's Internet committee.

I owe a true debt of thanks to my predecessor in the job, Bob Finn, for showing me the ropes and getting me off to a good start. And to A'ndrea Elyse Messer, NASW's tireless back-up cybrarian, for making it possible for me to get away from my computer from time to time, in addition to the daily work she does on the site.

I'd also like to thank the NASW officers and board for their guidance and unwavering support. Last, but definitely not least, thanks to NASW Executive Director



PHOTO BY ANNE L. WENZEL

*Freelance writer and editor Craig Hicks managed NASW's Web site and e-mail discussion groups from April 2004-April 2005. He welcomes your messages at [craig@grackle.com](mailto:craig@grackle.com)*



Diane McGurgan for her continual encouragement and invaluable perspective on our often idiosyncratic organization and its operations.

And now, some recent highlights from our online discussions:

### ***nasw-freelance***

Do bulk discounts make good business sense? Medical writer **David Surface** tossed this teaser over the transom of *nasw-freelance* (March 31, 2005) and received a range of responses.

"An old client of mine—a large healthcare system—has asked me to write 18 'mailers' for physicians, highlighting specific physicians and programs at their hospitals to promote to potential referrers," Surface explained. "They say they want 400-500 words each, and have offered to provide me with background and copy points.

"Normally, I'd charge [my usual rate] for an individual piece like this, and have charged them the same for other types of pieces of similar length. But when I do the math on this one, I get cold feet and start thinking about cutting them a break and lowering the per-piece price because of the sheer number of pieces they're offering me. Am I being a dope? Any observations, suggestions?"

"David, I don't think you are being a dope. Many businesses offer bulk discounts," replied Illinois writer **Bill Thomasson**. "Just make it clear that's what you're doing.

"Tell them that if they're willing to contract for the entire 18-piece project, with payments made on a specified timeline, then you will give them a project fee that is lower than the total would be if you had to bill for each piece individually."

Marylander **Alan Wachter** offered a different perspective. "In my opinion, it would be a mistake to lower your rate because of the volume of work. Your fee and hours should remain the same; only your income should increase," he wrote. "In my experience, the more you can deliver at your usual rate, the more work you will get from the client. Think bigger."

"You need to run your business your way," advised Arizona freelancer **Star Lawrence**. "Each [writing project] takes research and thinking anew. Because you could [use] a set format and maybe save a few minutes that way, you could go with the low end of your estimate times 18. Only you know the client and what you need to add for delays, multiple approvals, rewrites, etc."

"I understand your gulping when faced with large estimate sums—I seem to do a lot of that too," sympathized New Jersey's **Anne Sasso**. But she agreed with others who said Surface should charge his regular rate.

"Whenever I gulp about my estimates," she added, "I pull out Cameron Foote's book, *The Business Side of Creativity*, and read for a bit for moral support and instant pep talk. The book is a bit pricey and it's slanted

more toward graphic design firms, but I keep it as handy as my dictionary (okay, I gulp a lot) and refer to it often."

### ***nasw-talk***

Amid a maelstrom of messages about Terri Schiavo's feeding tube, the roles of science and religion in U.S. politics, and the merits of peer review for research articles, science history writer **Blaire Bolles** of New York offered a comparably non-controversial but compelling pointer about a new online resource.

"I just noticed that Google News has introduced a new feature, [so] you can customize the look of your Google News home page," he noted. "At first I thought this meant merely that I could put the science news higher up in the display but it also has a customized section feature, enabling you to flag stories that are on some subject of interest.

"You just list your key words and make your section. If your beat is, for example, 'aluminum alloys' you can create a section that contains stories with those two key words. It looks like a handy tool for anybody following a subject."

To read the full text of these and other discussions, see the *nasw-freelance* and *nasw-talk* sections of the "Mailing List Archives" area on the NASW.org Web site. ■

## THE FREE LANCE

by Tabitha M. Powledge

### ***Search here***

Many thousands of articles and other research materials live on my hard drive. Yours too, I bet. Doubtless a proportion of this is worthless clutter, but much is potentially valuable for work. Some of my stuff was collected as long as 15 years ago, so it's older than anything on the Web. Some was collected this morning for current projects and will disappear from the Web tomorrow. My computer's hard drive (and a duplicate stashed on an external hard drive) are humongous filing cabinets that have murdered no trees and take up no floor space in my jam-packed office. With many gigabytes on today's inexpensive hard drives, there's no need to delete files that—who knows?—might come in handy some day. Before tackling a Web search, it makes sense to look at what we've got already, right?

If we could only find it.

Apparently some people just fling all their bytes, higgledy piggledy, into My Documents. I'm lazy and like to save trouble, so mine is organized in an old-fashioned hierarchical alphabetical filing system of labeled topical folders and subfolders. When I need something, I can check through folders likely to be pertinent, looking for relevant file names, although this skimming misses a

*Tabitha M. Powledge can be reached at tam@nasw.org.*

lot. Or I can do a primitive keyword search with the Windows Find tool. But it's pokey and sloppy and doesn't pick up every file type.

What we need is software that will search our hard drives quickly and accurately and can present us with anything, from background for an article to that assignment e-mail from a month ago, from a birthday-party photo to a song downloaded last week. What we need is a really good search engine that will look through all kinds of files on our own computers rather than on the Web.

The computer folks finally figured that out and all of a sudden there's a bunch of such programs. Apple is building one for MacUsers into its new operating system, which may be out by the time you read this. But as I write, all available desktop searchers are for PCs, and only two have been released officially. One is Copernic (<http://www.copernic.com/en/products/desktop-search/>), which began several years ago as a Web search engine based on computers rather than online. The other, and the one that has gotten all the attention, is yet another Google product (<http://desktop.google.com/>).

All desktop searchers are free, and all work the same way: They can index the contents of most files on your hard drive, even spreadsheets, pictures, music, and videos. By default they exclude some files although you can sometimes add certain file types back in to the index. Enter your keyword(s), and the program consults its database, returning next-to-immediately with a list of hits sorted by date, file type, or other criteria. When you first install the program, it spends many hours or even days building its initial index in those moments when your computer is idle because you're conjuring up a fabulous lead. Thereafter it indexes new files right away, which takes just about no time at all and renders them searchable almost instantly. Neat.

The prospect of a really useful desktop searcher had me dancing around my office when Google Desktop first came out about a year ago, but it had one huge flaw: it couldn't yet index PDF files. Those memory-grabbing monsters are an increasingly large proportion of our research, so that defect took Google Desktop out of the "really useful" category for me. But in reading around I learned that Copernic, which makes a number of products, had a desktop searcher that could handle PDFs. Several years ago I had given Copernic's computer-based Web search engine a whirl and liked it pretty well, but then Google descended from heaven and I never looked back. So last year I tried Copernic Desktop Search and have used it happily ever after. Now Google Desktop can search PDFs, so a comparison is in order.

I expected to like the Google product better because I always have, and the reviewers have been huzzah-ing. But I don't. Copernic has some advantages—one in particular—that makes it superior for our kind of searching. Its hit list comes with a generously sized preview

pane, so you can view a promising-looking file, even scroll all the way through it, and copy from it, without opening the program that created it. Ah, the indescribable joy of not having to load cumbersome Acrobat or Word just to make sure this is really the file you need. Google Desktop, by contrast, works and looks like its Web search. It loads hits into a browser window, and many of them—but not all—come with a couple of lines showing your keyword in context. Sometimes a couple of lines is enough, but often you want more. With Copernic, you can get more—the whole file, if you like.

Both programs can index TXT, RTE, HTML, PDF, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint documents, audio, video, and image files, Web caches from Internet Explorer, Netscape, and Firefox, some kinds of contacts and instant messages, and e-mails in Outlook, Outlook Express, and Mozilla Thunderbird. Copernic can also index Word Perfect documents, Eudora e-mail, your Web History and Bookmarks, and many other file types. Google can index some of these too if you add free plugins from other developers; find them at <http://desktop.google.com/plugins.html>. Given Google's clout, this third-party list of add-ons will grow, and before long Google will be able to do pretty much anything the other desktop searchers can.

But as long as Copernic has a preview pane and Google doesn't, Copernic will remain my Desktop Searcher of choice. Another essential feature that Google lacks (at least for now): Copernic lets you add the odd file type to its index. I have been able to index proprietary files from Info Select, my invaluable long-time information manager. It contains many thousands of articles and other material not stored as individual files. Being unable to search them along with separate documents would be as handicapping for me as being unable to search PDFs. Copernic can also organize hits by date into helpful chunks—Today, Wednesday, last week, three weeks ago, last month, last year. You often know approximately when you collected something, and paging through a date-sectioned list is much easier than with Google's undivided list. Also, Copernic tells you when it's indexing, and you can pause indexing for as long as you like; Google doesn't let on when it's indexing and permits you to pause for only 15 minutes at a time. Copernic also indexes several file types separately so that you can search just, say, photos or emails. Google throws everything into the same pot. That could be handy on occasion, I guess, but it lengthens searches, and most of the time you know perfectly well whether you're looking for an e-mail or a photo.

### *Search there*

Sometimes the information you need is not on either your desktop or the Web, and you must consult an even more enormous database that goes back decades. That's LexisNexis. Until recently you could only use

LexisNexis by commissioning a search through a middleman like a library or by paying a very large flat rate. But now there's LexisNexis AlaCarte! (<http://www.lexisnexis.com/>). It's a pay-as-you-go service that lets you sign up and conduct searches for free and pay just \$3 apiece for the documents you buy. With AlaCarte you get access to only 3.8 billion documents from 20,000 sources, instead of the 6 billion/32,000 in the full LexisNexis, but who's counting? The deal does include business public records. What's mainly missing is individual public records, and a good thing, too.

Don't forget that once you have bibliographic information on a document, you can very often get the full text for free. One approach is to Google the exact title or some other distinctive string from the article; this yields success so often for me that it's always worth a shot. Or you can check the publication itself, on the Web or (the old-fashioned way) in the library. Remember the library? It's still there, only now it's apt to have wireless 'Net access for your laptop—and a coffee bar.

### Search everywhere

I was going to spend most of this column raving about Mozilla Firefox (<http://www.mozilla.org/>), which I have been using with pleasure and profit since last year. But I have run out of space, so I will simply say: Whether your operating system is Windows, Mac, or Linux, get this up-and-coming browser right now. Be sure to add the Tabbrowser Preferences plugin (<https://addons.update.mozilla.org/extensions/?application=firefox/>); it will improve your tabbed browsing experience. What's tabbed browsing? Better. ■

## PIO FORUM

by Dennis Meredith

### E-mail Services; also, Working with NIH

While in past columns, I've discussed creating e-mail newsletters to broadcast your news to your audiences—in the words of the legendary *Saturday Night Live* character Emily Litella, "Never mind!" (well, sort of).

Now, without having to set up your own e-mail newsletter system, you can use the new Google Alerts service ([www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts)) to



PHOTO BY JIM WALLACE, DUKE U. PHOTOGRAPHY

*Dennis Meredith is assistant v. p. of news and communications at Duke University. He can be reached at [dennis.meredith@duke.edu](mailto:dennis.meredith@duke.edu) or 919-681-8054. He welcomes comments and topic suggestions for future columns.*

give your audiences the ability to receive e-mail notification of your releases. This free service offers customized e-mail feeds of your news releases—instant, daily, or weekly.

Of course, this service won't bring subscribers the magazine articles, Web sites, and other materials that you can feature in your e-mail newsletters. But given that the cost to you is zero, and the only effort is providing your audience subscribing instructions, it's certainly a worthwhile service to advertise.

A customized Google Alerts service for your releases relies on the fact that Google News ([news.google.com](http://news.google.com)) lists not only media stories, but also releases posted on Ascribe, EurekAlert!, and Newswise. So, Google Alerts subscribers can specify your institution's name as a Google Alerts search term, plus one of these services, and the system will send them links to your releases.

For example, since Duke uses EurekAlert!, we give subscribers the following instructions on receiving Google Alerts about *all* Duke research news:

- Register on the Google Alerts sign-up page ([www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts)) and specify search terms *Duke University EurekAlert*
- Specify *News* as the alert type
- Choose whether you wish to receive alerts "as it happens," "once a day," or "once a week."

Also, users can receive releases about specific topics. For example, if they're interested in cancer research, they can add cancer to the search terms (e.g. *Duke University EurekAlert cancer*).

To receive alerts about multiple topics, a user would list the topics separated by "or". For example, to get Duke news releases on cancer, engineering, and environment, the search terms would be *Duke University EurekAlert cancer OR engineering OR environment*.

Of course, users interested in both news releases and media stories about your institution's research could leave off the *Ascribe*, *EurekAlert*, or *Newswise* search terms. The upside of that idea is that the media stories they receive will give them a sense of how the research is being covered.

The downside, however, is that some media stories might have errors that you don't particularly want your audience to see. For example, we recently did a story about research by Duke neurobiologists who had discovered that monkeys will forego a significant juice reward in order to see an image of a high-ranking monkey's face or a female monkey's hindquarters. The male monkey's interest in the latter image comes from the desire to assess mating receptivity. Our release emphasized that this discovery had important implications for studying autism, since it offered a quantifiable, manipulable animal model of the kind of social sense that autistic people lack. However, a few media wrote incomplete,

sometimes sarcastic, stories about Duke researchers proving that monkeys like “porn.”

When you're writing releases meant to be picked up by a customized Google Alerts service, you must ensure that they contain pertinent keywords. All your releases on engineering, for example, must contain that keyword. Since our engineering releases always cite the Pratt School of *Engineering* as the source, we can be sure all engineering releases will be picked up.

Besides retrieving your news release, Google Alerts also retrieves releases from other institutions that mention yours. It may surprise you to discover that your faculty are included in other institutions' releases, and you weren't even aware of the releases, or perhaps even of the research.

To see an example of an instruction page, go to the Duke Google Alert instructions at [www.dukenews.duke.edu/googlealerts.html](http://www.dukenews.duke.edu/googlealerts.html). Also, there's an FAQ on the Google Alerts page with more information on the service.

While specifying either Ascribe, EurekAlert! or Newswise as search terms will result in Google Alerts of your science, medicine, and technology news, to offer a broader range of releases, you would specify Ascribe or Newswise. Those services allow subscribers to post releases on arts and humanities, for example.

Besides telling you about Google Alerts, I'd also like to bring you up to date on promising developments in PIO-funding agency collaborations. I've been in touch with colleagues at the NIH, and—like the NSF-PIO initiative described in my last column—they are also creating policies and procedures to enhance NIH-PIO collaborations, to the benefit of both groups.

For example, they are establishing a central point of contact at NIH to help PIOs find out which institute funds the research you're writing about, if you don't know it. However, you can usually find out the institute from your researcher, and NIH maintains a list of media contacts ([www.nih.gov/news/media\\_contacts.htm](http://www.nih.gov/news/media_contacts.htm)) that can be your point of liaison.

When you have a hot NIH-funded story, it's to your benefit to let them know about it. For example, a quote in your release from an NIH expert will add credibility and give reporters a good source. My NIH colleagues also emphasize that they realize that you're often on tight deadlines, and they don't intend to slow you down or add layers of review.

Just as with NSF, NIH can give your research advances more visibility by highlighting them in their news releases, on their Web sites, in material prepared for Congress, and in other NIH print and electronic outlets.

For example, the NIH's National Institute of General Medical Sciences has just launched an e-newsletter, Biomedical Beat ([www.nigms.nih.gov/biobeat](http://www.nigms.nih.gov/biobeat)), which will showcase your news releases about NIGMS-supported research. Its audiences are media, researchers,

scientific thought leaders, teachers, and the general public. Each monthly Biomedical Beat features four to six recent research advances and includes links to the original release, lab home pages, and other relevant material. Whether a release is selected for inclusion in Biomedical Beat or not, there's a good chance that NIGMS will post it on its home page ([www.nigms.nih.gov/news/releases/funded\\_research.html](http://www.nigms.nih.gov/news/releases/funded_research.html)). To have your releases considered for the newsletter, send them to [info@nigms.nih.gov](mailto:info@nigms.nih.gov).

As NIH develops its PIO collaboration policies, they welcome input. You can contact Marin Allen of the NIH Office of Communications and Public Liaison ([marin\\_allen@nih.gov](mailto:marin_allen@nih.gov), 301-496-5787) and/or Ann Dieffenbach of the NIGMS OCPL ([dieffena@nigms.nih.gov](mailto:dieffena@nigms.nih.gov), 301-496-7301) with comments or suggestions.

As their plans evolve, I'll be covering more details on how to work with NIH to publicize research at your institution. ■

## ACS GRADY-STACK AWARD GOES ROBERT L. WOLKE



PHOTO BY BILL EXLER

**Chemist Robert L. Wolke is honored by his chemistry peers.**

University of Pittsburgh chemistry professor emeritus Robert L. Wolke is the 2005 recipient of the American Chemical Society's James T. Grady-James H. Stack Award for Interpreting Chemistry for the Public.

Wolke was honored for his biweekly column for the *Washington Post*, “Food 101,” in which he serves up witty mini-essays on such topics as how fruits ripen, how microwave ovens work, and the chemistries of chocolate, marshmallows, and gravy. Wolke has written the column for seven years.

Writing about food science has become Wolke's full-time occupation since he retired from Pitt in 1990, following 30 years as a professor and administrator. His food column is distributed to more than 600 newspapers by the Los Angeles Times-Washington Post News Syndicate, and he has authored a series of books that help explain chemistry and general science to the public: *What Einstein Didn't Know—Scientific Answers to Everyday Questions*, *What Einstein Told His Barber—More Scientific Answers to Everyday Questions*, and *What Einstein Told His Cook—Kitchen Science Explained*. His next book, *What Einstein Told His Cook 2, The Sequel—Further Adventures in Kitchen Science*, will be published in April 2005. ■

(Source: University of Pittsburgh newsletter)

## 2004 AAAS SCIENCE JOURNALISM AWARD WINNERS NAMED

A series on killer germs defeating antibiotics, the dramatization of how Polynesians shared their seafaring skills with the Chumash people of Santa Barbara, Calif., the launch of the twin Mars Exploration Rovers, and an account of Iceland's ambitious hydrogen energy plan are among the entries to win the 2004 AAAS Science Journalism Awards.

### *Newspapers with a circulation of more than 100,000*

Amy Ellis Nutt of *The Star-Ledger* in Newark, N.J., for the series, "The New Plague," about how killer germs are defeating antibiotics. Nutt's presentation of the scientific information advanced the issue in terms of analysis. One of the award judges noted that although resistance to drugs is an important issue, the story is usually not covered by newspapers.

### *Newspapers with a circulation of less than 100,000*

Melinda Burns of the *Santa Barbara News-Press* wrote about an unconventional theory that Polynesians crossed the sea to Santa Barbara 1,300 years ago and stayed long enough to share their seafaring skills with the local Chumash people. "The Ancient Mariners" dramatized the science process and portrays how science is a dialogue.

### *Magazines*

According to the competition judges, NASW Member W. Wayt Gibbs's winning article, "The Unseen Genome: Gems among the Junk," in *Scientific American*, is a model for science writing. Gibbs wrote about the bits of "junk" DNA that scientists are finding in genes, and the discovery "in chromosomes of two vast, but largely hidden, layers of information that affect inheritance, development and disease." The story read like a thriller, with big ideas put forward for new avenues for science.

### *Radio*

NASW member Cynthia Graber, a freelance reporter for National Public Radio's *Living on Earth*, reported on Iceland's ambitious plan to wean off imported oil and switch to hydrogen to fuel its cars, trucks, buses, and fishing fleet, and took home the radio prize with "The Promise of Hydrogen." Graber painted a vivid picture through the radio medium, traveling a great distance to capture the story and conducting impressive interviews while on location. She expertly captured her journey, the science and the sounds of Iceland.

### *Television*

Mark Davis wrote, directed, and produced "Mars Dead or Alive," a drama that aired on *WGBH/NOVA* about the launch of the twin Mars Exploration Rovers (M.E.R.). Davis infused the storytelling with the scientists' personalities, emphasizing the human drama of what went on behind the scenes. The program provides a private look at a public project and shows the decision-making process while it is happening.

### *Online*

NASW member Carl Zimmer's three-part series appeared in *Corante.com*. "Hamilton's Fall," "Why The Cousins are Gone," and "My Darwinian Daughters" provide a microcosm of the world that sparks an interest in science and leads readers to question assumptions. One of the judges said that Zimmer's essays were "the closest thing to Stephen Jay Gould I've read in ages."

### *Award History*

The AAAS Science Journalism Awards program, established in 1945, was created to "foster the public's understanding and appreciation of science, by promoting best practices in journalism." The awards program has been sponsored by Westinghouse Corporation, The Whitaker Foundation, and currently by Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Research & Development, L.L.C. ■

(Source: AAAS news release)

## REPORTERS GET CRANKY WHEN CEO'S HIDE FACTS

by Tim Friend

Got a new drug? Cure for heart disease? Fine. People understand that. But when you talk "biotechnology" what's the first thing that comes to the public's mind?

The challenges of communicating your message are greater than you know. The public just doesn't get it. Wall Street analysts, despite their hubris, don't get it, either. But who is at fault? The media is only the messenger. And most of us—reporters and especially TV types—are simply not as informed as you. We're not scientists, but we'll tell any story we can understand—and believe.

The failure to communicate the importance of biotechnology rests with the CEO of every company that has a story to sell. It's not enough to create a new product that will revolutionize industry, agriculture, or medicine. You must be able to explain honestly what

*Tim Friend was the science and biotechnology reporter for USA Today from 1987-2004. Currently, he is working on a book on microbial genomics.*

you do in simple terms the rest of us can understand.

Does your mother know what you really do for a living? Or does she just accept that you're brilliant, run a company, and are making cool stuff and money? Maybe that's okay for the people you know, but it does not convey to the public. If you want to get your message to the general reader of newspapers, whether it's the *New York Times* or *USA Today*, you must be able to make the reporter understand—really understand—what it is that you are doing.

Believe me when I tell you that reporters basically want to please. The only time they get cranky is when they don't understand or feel that you are hiding something. Of course, most of the time, you are hiding facts, or caveats.

As most of you know, agriculture biotech poisoned the party before you got started. They assumed a paternal attitude that people didn't need to know the details, and only needed to know the great wonders they would bring to the world. But the public is smarter than most of us think.

As a reporter I hear often from readers who love to point out mistakes in my stories. But they get it when the message is real. When you deal with media, remember that the reporter and the public are ready and eager to understand. But you have to be straight. Tell them what you don't know along with the great things you plan to do for them in the future.

We're all selling stock. As reporters we try our best to sell stock in trust. So should you. ■

*"Getting Your Message to the Media," LifeLines, published by BIOCOM (San Diego), March 2005.*

## NEWS FROM AFAR

by Jim Cornell

### Science Writing in Germany

The German science-writing group known as TELI (the "technical literary society") celebrated its 75th anniversary in October. Founded in Berlin in 1929 by a group of editors with prominent newspapers and magazines, as well as writers working for large industrial and engineering firms, TELI lays claim to being the world's oldest association of technical writers.

Although many of the original members were essentially public relations practitioners, they all felt

*Jim Cornell is president of the International Science Writers Association. Send items of interest—international programs, conferences, events, etc.—to [cornelljc@earthlink.net](mailto:cornelljc@earthlink.net).*

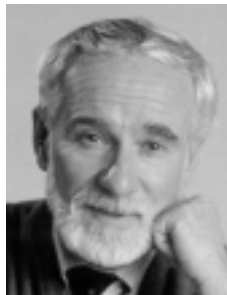


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

strongly that communicating technical subjects to the public required literary, or storytelling, qualities, thus, the organization's name and its later attraction to many journalists who shared that same idea. Today, the group, like NASW, is comprised of both working press and public affairs specialists from both the private and public sectors.

This mixed bag of members sets TELI apart from Germany's other major science-writing association, the WPK, which admits only working journalists. Understandably, there is some tension between the two groups, but, perhaps inspired by the EU example—and the potential benefits of combined firepower—they have been discussing a unified organization that could also include other associations, for example, that of the medical journalists.

In fact, arguments for and against such an "umbrella association" were made at one of the many workshops held during in the landmark *WissensWerte* (Need To Know) conference in Bremen this past November.

Part of an on-going campaign to improve the quality of science communication initiated and supported by the Bertelsmann and VW foundations and the BASF company, the event was the biggest of its kind ever held for science communicators in Germany, attracting more than 300, many of them young writers seeking both professional insights and contacts. Indeed, according to Wolfgang Goede of *PM Magazine*, "the age of the participants in many workshops was between 25 and 40."

Interestingly, too, according to Goede, was the number of press officers and communications people from universities and research laboratories, and the freelancers, in attendance. In short, the German meeting was starting to look much like its US counterparts. Similarly, the debates over conflicts between journalists and information officers, and the increasingly porous border between both groups, sounded very American.

Ironically, and even more American-like, the Bremen meeting, with its obvious appeal to a young, vibrant, and growing science-writing community, took place amidst growing concern about the future of the profession. One recommendation for subsequent conferences was that publishers sit down and explain why they keep cutting both manpower and pay scales, with a resultant reduction in quality journalism.

As Goede explains, "fewer and fewer full-time editors and staff writers are being employed, and more and more freelancers are taking their places.

"That would be fine," he argues, "except many freelancers receive very little money and, naturally, have little time or resources for sophisticated research.

"What science journalists have long been complaining about in the United States, the loss of quality, is coming to Germany!" ■

## OUR GANG

by Jeff Grabmeier

**Moving is old hat.** The peripatetic **Rick Borchelt** has settled down in Washington, D.C. to become the new director of communications for the Genetics & Public Policy Center, established to be an independent and objective source of credible information on genetic technologies and genetic policies for the public, media, and policymakers. Working with Rick will be **Audrey Huang**, who is the center's communications officer. The center, funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, is a part of The Phoebe R. Berman Bioethics Institute at Johns Hopkins University. Rick is at rborchel1@jhu.edu and, Audrey is at ahuang18@jhu.edu.



PHOTO BY JO McNULTY, OHIO STATE

**New job all zipped up.** **Melissa Withers**, who was the assistant director for communications and public affairs at the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research at MIT, has moved on. Apparently fed up with a 90-minute commute to Cambridge from Providence, R.I., Melissa has taken a communications post with Rhode Island's Economic Development Corporation, only seven minutes from her home. In her new job, Melissa will be begging, pleading with, and cajoling new industries to move to Rhode Island, but once the dust settles she also hopes to continue doing freelance science and medical writing on the side. Melissa's new coordinates are mwithers@riedc.com.

**Fits like a glove.** The Salk Institute for Biological Studies, in La Jolla, Calif., has hired **Cathy Yarbrough** as its new vice president of communications. Cathy comes to Salk via Rockefeller University, in New York, where she was vice president of communications and public affairs. Congratulate Cathy at yarbrough@salk.edu.

**Buckle down to freelancing.** Meanwhile, **Andrew Porterfield** has left the Salk Institute, where he was associate director of communications, to pursue a career as a freelancer. He will concentrate on biomedical writing (including devices, drugs, and research), media relations, and manuscript preparation. Andrew is at amporterfield@cox.net.

**Science writing is so fashionable!** **Jennifer Wettlaufer**, a relatively new member of NASW, is freelancing in Buffalo, N.Y., and heading "The Writers' Block" a special interest group within "Brainstorm," the communicators' club of Buffalo. "The Writers' Block"

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

provides writers with regular opportunities to exchange ideas and learn more about writing copy for fun and profit. You can find Jennifer at buffalolink@earthlink.net.

**New job under her belt.** Another new science writer and NASW member is **Karen Hoffman**, who graduated in May 2004 from Carnegie Mellon University, with a double major in biological sciences and professional writing. She is now a senior news representative at the University of Pittsburgh, where she reports on science and engineering research. Welcome Karen to NASW by writing to klh52@pitt.edu.

**Ready to roll up his sleeves.** **Wilson da Silva** has helped launch *Cosmos*, a new monthly Australian popular-science magazine. Wilson will serve as editor of the magazine, which will hit the newsstands in June. *Cosmos* is being produced by a new publishing company, Luna Media Pty Ltd, which Wilson co-founded. More information is at [www.cosmosmagazine.com](http://www.cosmosmagazine.com). Wilson can be contacted at wdas@nasw.org.

**Hats off to you!** **Charlotte Libov** has been appointed managing editor of *Neurology Now*, a new magazine for patients and their caregivers. The magazine is sponsored by the American Academy of Neurology and published in cooperation with Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, which also publishes the leading twice-monthly scientific journal *Neurology*. Charlotte's e-mail is char@ntplx.net.

**Move to U.S. all sewn up.** And this year's NASW award for the longest move to a new job goes to **Daniel Stolte**, who moved from Germany to become a science writer and editor at the University of Arizona, in Tucson. He will be working for BIO5, the university's Institute for Collaborative Bioresearch. Before coming to Tucson, Daniel was a science writer/editor at the German Cancer Research Center, in Heidelberg. He reports he first became interested in both science writing and Arizona in 1996-97, when he was a student at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff. Say *guten tag* to Daniel at stolte@email.arizona.edu.

**Award up her sleeve.** Freelancer **Nancy Marie Brown** was recently honored for *Mendel in the Kitchen: A Scientist Looks at Genetically Modified Food* (Joseph Henry Press, 2004), a book she co-authored with National Academies of Science geneticist Nina Fedoroff. The book was listed on *Library Journal's* "Best Sci-Tech Books of 2004." Send your congratulations to nmb@nasw.org.

**Dressed like a pop star?** If you've ever seen NASW members dance, you know that science writers definitely have an ear for music—well, maybe not. But one member who definitely does is **Valerie Brown**. She recently received a grant to research and write a history of the Portland, Ore., music scene in the late '60s and early '70s. She knows a little about the subject, having spent 12 years as a musician, writing and singing original

songs, playing the guitar and flute in clubs, and, as she says "generally leading the wild life associated with popular music." She says the project "will make a nice antidote to the bad news I'm usually writing about in environmental health." You can talk about music with Valerie at [vjane@teleport.com](mailto:vjane@teleport.com).

**Filling new shoes.** C. Blake Powers has accepted a position at Purdue University, in West Lafayette, Ind., where he will be working in the Engineering Communications Office. Blake will be involved with marketing and communications for the Weldon School of Biomedical Engineering. Blake's new e-mail is [powersc@purdue.edu](mailto:powersc@purdue.edu).

**Pulling work out of her hat.** Sandra Katzman, a freelancer in Japan, covered two international meetings in Japan sponsored by the nonprofit Ship and Ocean Foundation. She covered Geo-Agenda for the Future: Securing the Oceans and Indo-Japan Dialogue on Ocean Security. Sandra is at [skatzman@nasw.org](mailto:skatzman@nasw.org). ■

## REGIONAL GROUPS

by Suzanne Clancy

### Chicago

The newly revitalized Chicago group held three meetings in 2004 and has plans in the works for several meetings in 2005. Martha McClintock, a researcher at the University of Chicago who studies the influence of hormones on human behavior, and her colleagues hosted the group's first meeting on Sept. 23. About 15 Chicago area science writers attended the meeting, which included a presentation on McClintock's research and a tour of her laboratory. On Nov. 4, members gathered for a luncheon panel discussion on trends in pediatrics featuring the University of Chicago's Steven A.N. Goldstein. To celebrate the successful relaunch, about 20 members attended a social gathering and an evening tour of the Chicago's Garfield Park Conservatory, on Dec. 2. With more than 70 science writers in the area and a lot of enthusiasm, the Chicago group is looking forward to another successful year. If you would like more information or to be added to the group's mailing list, contact [bridgetkuehn@hotmail.com](mailto:bridgetkuehn@hotmail.com).



PHOTO BY MARC LEBERMAN

*Suzanne Clancy is a science writer with The Burnham Institute in La Jolla, Calif. Send information about regional meetings and events to [sclancy@burnham.org](mailto:sclancy@burnham.org).*

### Washington, D.C.

Big news from Washington: The D.C. Science Writers Association not only survived—but prevailed—in organizing the traditional science writers' party of the AAAS meeting. For all the many moments of panic and chaos leading up to the party, on Sat., Feb. 19, everything seemed to come together, like magic, in the end. By 6:01 p.m., following a final half-hour of especially frantic last-minute preparations, volunteers were checking party-goers into Lulu's Club Mardi Gras with impressive efficiency. The hot buffet and salad bar were open, the 11-piece dance band was rocking (as were quite a few science writers), a high-tech DJ was holding forth in a separate room, and clips from classic science fiction films were showing on Lulu's multitude of TV screens. Things kicked into high gear when the caterers rolled out the chocolate fountain (a big hit, needless to say). One chocoholic DCSWAN, obviously too eager for her fix to mess around with dipping strawberries and such, was observed to hold a beer cup under the fountain and then chug the stuff straight. By the time the festivities had officially ended, some 400 guests had passed through the portals—all of whom, most importantly, seemed to have had a wonderful time.

### Los Angeles

On the significant date of Sep. 11, 2004, two prominent medical researchers spoke on bio and chemical terrorism, in the first of a series of symposia and lectures presented jointly by Southern California Science Writers and the MIT Club of Southern California. The symposium was held at UCLA. Dr. Michael Yeaman, biodefense specialist and professor of medicine at UCLA, discussed the history of bioterrorism since 1346, when a besieging Tartar army catapulted corpses of plague victims into the midst of Genoese forces defending the city of Caffa (now Feodosia, Ukraine). The Genoese carried the plague to Italy, and helped to cause the Black Death of 1347-50. "Plague has a high threat potential," said Dr. Yeaman. "If undetected, it has a 75 percent mortality rate." He also discussed smallpox, which some believe is accessible to terrorists. "Some cultures of smallpox are unaccounted for, because not all were centralized in 1980, when the World Health Organization so ordered," he explained. "The disease is now almost nonexistent, but it can spread from a single case." As other potential threats he mentioned Ebola, for which there is no specific vaccine, and cholera, which can be engineered. Dr. Cary A. Presant, cancer specialist and clinical professor of medicine at USC, discussed the possible use of dirty bombs. He described a dirty bomb as consisting of a core of conventional explosive wrapped in a jacket of radioactive powder or chemical, and capable of injuring 1,000 to 10,000 people. Dr. Presant said terrorists' goals include panic spreading,



economic disruption, and recruitment of more terrorists. He called for citizen vigilance, including reporting of suspicious behavior to legal authorities and maintaining food and water supplies. "Our entire direction changed on 9/11," he asserted. "The date should become a day of commitment to preparedness and survival."

### **New York**

Members of SWINY, Science Writers in New York, and other area writers spent a January afternoon at the Liberty Science Center, in Jersey City, N.J. Through a videoconference with Morristown Hospital's Dr. John Brown and his surgical team, viewers watched a surgery—from incision to suturing—and learned firsthand about the work of team members from the scrub nurse and perfusionist to the surgeon. Writers had the added benefit of an on-site visit with several heart specialists, including Dr. Craig Smith, the surgeon who performed former President Bill Clinton's bypass operation. In early December, SWINY held its annual holiday party with the Empire State-Metro New York Chapter of the American Medical Writers Association, at The Cornell Club-New York. The opportunity to catch up with local colleagues didn't end there, however. SWINY began its second year of holding quarterly socials for science writers by co-hosting a second social for science, medical and technology media with Mediabistro.com. About 60 media professionals attended the Feb. 9 event, the latest of several socials that seem to be fostering a greater sense of community among New York City science writers. On March 14, SWINY hosted a panel discussion on Understanding the Tsunami: What's the Science That Led to It, What Do We Need to Do In Its Aftermath? at the NY Academy of Sciences.

### **San Diego**

On March 14, SanDSWA members attended a press reception featuring University of Pittsburgh chemist professor emeritus Robert M. Wolke, author of *What Einstein Told His Cook: Kitchen Science Explained* and the bi-weekly "Food 101" column in the *Washington Post*. Given San Diego's geographic proximity to Mexico, Wolke discussed the chemistry behind what makes hot peppers hot. Offerings on the hors d'oeuvres table provided a practical demonstration and margaritas helped extinguish the burn (perceived or otherwise). The event was sponsored by the American Chemical Society and held in conjunction the ACS 229th national meeting, in San Diego. Wolke, an NASW member, was in town to receive the 2005 James T. Grady-James H. Stack Award for Interpreting Chemistry for the Public (see page 20). ■

## **NOTICES FROM DIANE**

by Diane McGurgan

### **Dues, roster, database**

You've heard it before, you're hearing it again: **the deadline for dues is past**. If you wish to get in the 2005 Member Roster, your checks and credit card numbers must get here ASAP. If you don't pay by June 1, 2005 you will be dropped from the membership rolls (period!) and stop receiving member benefits.

A few pointers: If you pay by Visa or Mastercard, I need the three-digit security number from the back of the card (NASW is charged more if I don't have it), and if you pay online by Paypal via ([nasw.org/NASW/renewals.htm](http://nasw.org/NASW/renewals.htm)), please provide your address. It is very time-consuming to look everyone up.



PHOTO BY ANDREW SKOLNICK

### **Awards**

Deadline for the CASW-Victor Cohn Award in Medical Science Writing is July 31. Entry form brochures will be mailed out soon.

A reminder that the deadline for the NASW Science-in-Society Award has been changed to Feb. 2006 in order to adjust for the award of this prize in the fall of 2006. More information later this year.

### **If it sounds to good to be true**

NASW has learned that TTS (Total Transportation Solutions) has gone out of business. A years ago (SW, Winter 2003-04), information was provided on how to open an account through TTS in order to receive a 30 to 40 percent on DHL overnight services. A further incentive to try this service was NASW would receive a 10 percent rebate for each DHL transaction. With TTS's demise, NASW is no longer receiving the rebate. We trust members who signed up are still receiving their DHL discounts, but wanted you to know that NASW is no longer benefiting from this arrangement.

### **CASW Travel Fellows**

The following attended last fall's New Horizons of Science Briefings as CASW Travel Fellows. With generous support from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, the

travel fellows program allows beginning writers and reporters from small newspaper the opportunity to attend this science meeting.

The 2004 fellows were:

- Kathleen Angione, North Carolina Sea Grant, Raleigh
- Genevieve Bookwalter, *Santa Cruz Sentinel*
- Anna Davison, *Santa Barbara News-Press*
- Lisa Eckelbecker, *Worcester (Mass.) Telegram & Gazette*
- Andrew Kantor, *Roanoke Times*
- Julie Kinyoun, freelance, San Diego
- Suzie Parker, freelance, Little Rock, Ark.
- Czerne Reid, *The State*, Columbia, S.C.
- John G. Simmons, freelance, Apple River, Ill.
- Emily Singer, freelance, Somerville, Mass.

### **Fellows supported by authors coalition funding**

The following individuals received fellows to attend the Fall 2004 NASW Workshops, in Fayetteville, Ark.:

- Monya Baker, freelance, San Francisco
- Randy Dotinga, freelance, San Diego
- Tom Francis, reporter, *Cleveland Scene*
- Edna Francisco, freelance, Madison, Wis.
- Stephen Hart, freelance, Port Angeles, Wash.
- Jenny Bryers, freelance, Madison, Wis.

Authors Coalition funding also made possible fellows to attend the February 2005 NASW Workshops, in Washington, D.C.:

- Allan Coukell, freelance, Brookline, Mass.
- Alison Fromme, freelance, Berkeley
- Carol Milano, freelance, Brooklyn N.Y.
- Julian Smith, freelance, Santa Fe, N.M.
- Cynthia Washam, freelance Jensen Beach, Fla.
- David Williams, freelance, Seattle, Wash. ■

## **IN MEMORIAM**



PHOTO BY RICHARD SASSO

### **Dennis Flanagan**

*Scientific American* editor for 37 years

Dennis Flanagan, 85, who as editor of *Scientific American* helped foster science writing for the general reader, died at his home in Manhattan on Jan. 14. He was an NASW member for more than 50 years.

Flanagan, who ran *Scientific American* for nearly four decades, teamed editors with working scientists, publishing pieces by leading figures such as Albert Einstein, Linus Pauling, and J. Robert Oppenheimer.

Flanagan described his formula for deciding what to include in the magazine simply: "Science is what scientists do, not what nonscientists think they do or ought to be doing." After seeing his slogan translated into Dutch, he decided he liked the ring of it better in that language and hung a banner in his office emblazoned with the translation:

*Wetenschap is wat wetenschappers doen*

The formula proved to be a success. When Flanagan came to the magazine, along with partner and publisher Gerard Piel (who died in Sept. 2004), and general manager Donald H. Miller, it had a venerable history, having been published for 102 years, but its circulation was less than 40,000. By the time he retired in 1984, the circulation was well over 600,000.

Flanagan was born in New York City in 1919 and raised in Bucks County, Pa. He began his career in journalism on the eve of World War II. He was exempt from military service because of deafness due to childhood ear infections.

Flanagan, who taught himself to read lips, attended the University of Michigan, where he graduated in 1941. After his first unsuccessful attempts to find work, he conceived an elaborate job application entitled "What Dennis Flanagan Can Do For You." Years later he wrote:

It was a pack of lies, bullets followed by statements such as "Dennis Flanagan has edited a city newspaper" (the *Michigan Daily* one night a week in my junior year) and "Dennis Flanagan has written prize-winning fiction" (\$35 for a freshman short story). For the final bullet I had an inspiration: "Dennis Flanagan can run the 440 in 52.5 seconds, or will wrestle anyone in the crowd for five dollars."

Magazines were his target, and Flanagan sent his masterwork off to half a dozen. He eventually was hired by *Life* magazine as a \$20-a-week office boy. In due course he became a staff writer, specializing first in sports and later in military affairs. It fell to him to write the text and captions for WWII photos arriving at the magazine from photographers at the battle fronts. Among those stories was Robert Capa's photographic coverage of the D-Day landings at Omaha Beach. [For the 60th anniversary of D-Day Flanagan recalled in a *Nightline* broadcast how he and the photo staff at *Life* had to guess at what the Capa photos actually showed, with nothing to go on but a few unrevealing words in the *New York Times*.]

At about that time Gerard Piel was the science editor of *Life*, and when he left the magazine Flanagan became his successor, just in time to cover the dropping

of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In 1947, Flanagan and Piel joined forces and sought funding for a new magazine to be titled *The Sciences*. Then providence stepped in.

Flanagan's stepfather was a long-time friend and reader of Albert G. Ingalls, who wrote a column about telescopes for the old *Scientific American*. One day Ingalls sent out postcards advising readers that the magazine was going out of business. Flanagan shared the news with Piel and later recalled:

We looked at each other with the same thought. Instead of starting a new science magazine titled *The Sciences*, why didn't we start a new magazine with the old title *Scientific American*? We liked the title for itself, and although the magazine was then in sad shape, it had seen great days and would give us a ready-made history.

The partners turned to their investors and asked if they would consider buying and rejuvenating an old magazine instead of starting a new one. They liked the idea, and the first issue of the new *Scientific American* appeared in May 1948. Flanagan edited the magazine for the next 37 years.

In his book, *Flanagan's Version: A Spectator's Guide to Science on the Eve of the 21st Century* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), Flanagan recalled an encounter with Pauline Kael, the film critic of *The New Yorker*. After she said she knew nothing about science and he gently scolded her, she responded by saying: "Oh, you're a Renaissance hack."

It was a phrase Flanagan loved. "If tombstones were still in style," he wrote. "I would want to have the two words chiseled right under my name."

(Source: New York Times obituary and Flanagan family archives)

---

### **Richard Smyser**

*Former CASW Board Member*

Richard David "Dick" Smyser, 81, the founding editor of *The Oak Ridger* newspaper, died March 14 from congestive heart failure. Smyser served on the board of the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing (CASW) for nearly 20 years.

Smyser, born Aug. 19, 1923, in York, Pa., began his newspaper career in 1946 as a reporter for *The Chester* (Pa.) *Times*, now *The Delaware County Times*. At that time the publishers of the *Chester* paper were Alfred G. Hill and his wife, Julia G. Hill.

In the summer of 1948, the Hills were approached by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, a civilian agency created by Congress just the year before to take over the Manhattan Project from the military. Would the Hills, who had a reputation for newspaper pioneering, be interested in starting a daily newspaper in Oak Ridge, Tenn., largest of the three communities (Los Alamos, N.M. and Richland, Wash. were the others) created to house workers on the bomb project?

The Hills were interested. By the fall of 1948 plans for *The Oak Ridger* were under way and Smyser, still a reporter for the *Chester* paper, was named managing editor. *The Oak Ridger* published its first edition on Jan. 20, 1949.

The first successful privately-owned newspaper in the new Tennessee city, *The Oak Ridger* played a key role in Oak Ridge's transition from a totally federally owned and operated to a home-owning and self-governing community of 30,000. In 1957 and 1958, thousands of wartime built homes were sold, virtually all to their current occupants, and in May 1959 citizens voted overwhelmingly to incorporate and become a municipality.

Smyser, a 1944 journalism graduate of Pennsylvania State College (now University), was active in national newspaper editors' organizations for 40 years and served as president of the Associated Press Managing Editors Association (APME) in 1973-74 and president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) in 1984-85.

With both APME and ASNE, through committee memberships and chairmanships, Smyser led some of the first studies and surveys related to efforts to increase the numbers of minorities in newsrooms, as well as to broaden coverage to include news relevant to minority readers. His committee work also centered on generating story ideas and new concepts of news.

Because he edited a community newspaper in a town in which a large number of scientists lived and worked, Smyser was active in science-writing circles, especially relative to nuclear science.

"Dick Smyser, because of his strong connections to editors and publishers of smaller newspapers, and given his passion and enthusiasm, was the engine behind a major initiative of CASW—namely its traveling guru program," said CASW Executive Director Ben Patrusky. Through this initiative, veteran science writers spend a day or two in the newsrooms of smaller metropolitan papers counseling and working with editors and reporters on how best to increase and enhance local coverage of science. Among topics covered: how to find a local or regional angle for national stories and how to find and take advantage of local sources. Smyser did most of the contact work and made the arrangements for these visits—many by members of the CASW Board (David Perlman, Jerry Bishop, Phil Boffey, and Joann Rodgers

among them) to a host of newspapers over the years.

"Dick also played an important role in persuading Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the University of Tennessee to co-host the 2003 New Horizons in Science meeting," Patrusky said.

(Source: Ben Patrusky and The Oak Ridger)

### William M. Hines

Godfather of NASA space reporting

William M. Hines, 88, a former *Washington Star* and *Chicago Sun-Times* reporter who was considered the godfather of NASA space reporting, died February 28 of complications from treatment for pneumonia.

Hines was born in San Jose, Calif. and grew up in San Francisco, where his father was the publisher of the old *San Francisco Bulletin*. He attended Guilford College, in Greensboro, N.C., for about three years, but when offered a job at the *Chattanooga Times*, he took it.

During World War II, Hines served as an Army first lieutenant in the European theater. He worked briefly in the Pentagon's information office before joining the *Washington Star* as a reporter and later becoming Sunday editor.

Hines, who had a keen interest in science, persuaded his boss to allow him to report on the country's nascent space program shortly after the Russian space-ship Sputnik went up in 1957.

When an Apollo spacecraft caught fire on Jan. 27, 1967, killing three astronauts, Hines wrote an article in the *Nation* magazine criticizing NASA's attempts to maintain its image as an agency that gave, as one official said, "meticulous attention to the smallest detail." He prodded the agency and a congressional committee to look deeper for the root cause of the fire that killed Virgil I. "Gus" Grissom, Edward White, and Roger Chaffee, on Pad 34, at Kennedy Space Center.

"In these flack-driven times it is perhaps not surprising that the taxpaying public should be hoodwinked, falsely propagandized, deliberately misled, and on occasion even lied to by its servants," he wrote in 1967. "It is deplorable, however, and dangerous in the bargain that NASA has deluded itself into believing the reality of its own image."

Hines, a probing, impatient, sometimes abrasive reporter, was legendary among journalists for his thorough reporting and quick writing speed. In news conferences, where he would sit like a coiled cobra waiting to strike, he would sometimes leave NASA spokesmen speechless with his incisive questioning, colleagues said.

After leaving the *Star* in 1968, Hines worked at the

*Chicago Daily News* and later became Washington bureau chief of the *Chicago Sun-Times*. He retired from the *Sun-Times* in 1989 and continued to do freelance writing about space, physics, molecular biology, and other topics. He frequently was on *Meet the Press* and other television news shows. Hines was proud to learn years ago that he was on President Richard M. Nixon's "enemies list."

(Source: Washington Post obituary, © 2005 The Washington Post Company, with permission)

### Ralph Yalkovsky

NASW has learned of the death of freelance Ralph Yalkovsky, of Grand Island, N.Y. He had been an NASW member since 1976. ■

## BOOKS BY AND FOR MEMBERS

by Ruth Winter

***Das Buch der verrückten Experimente (The Book of Weird Experiments)* by Reto Schneider (NASW), published by Bertelsmann.**

A Swiss NASW member, Schneider's book is written in German but has an English Web site ([www.weirdexperiments.com](http://www.weirdexperiments.com)) with excerpts, funny movie clips, and information about his work.



"I always had a passion for the weird," Schneider explains. "When I did get the chance to write a monthly column about weird experiments in *NZZ-Folio* (a Swiss magazine), I began to realize that I was not alone. My readers liked those stories about blinking corpses, flying sheep, and ruthless theology students, not to mention wandering pubic hair and two-headed dogs. That is how the book originated. I stumbled across experiments that destroyed marriages and ended careers, experiments that made headlines, and others that have been endlessly recounted although they never really took place. And I have come to the conclusion that this odd collection may reveal more about the nature of science than do reports from cutting-edge research." Schneider's book became a bestseller in Germany. After four months it is in its fifth printing, and the Swiss freelancer hopes that an American publisher may be interested in translating it. Schneider can be reached at [r.schneider@nzz.ch](mailto:r.schneider@nzz.ch) or [www.folio.ch](http://www.folio.ch) and by fax at 41 1 258 12 59.

***All In My Head* by Paula Kamen, published by DaCapo Press.**

At the age of 24, Kamen was putting in her contact lenses. The left lens ignited a constellation of nerves behind her eye and the pain was more piercing, she said, than that of any other headache she ever had. More than a decade later, she still has the headache despite surgery, Botox, dousing of Lithuanian holy water, and a mountain of pharmaceutical products. She has the rare ability to make unrelenting pain funny. Kamen can be reached at [www.paulakamen.com](http://www.paulakamen.com).

***Waking The Warrior Goddess: Harnessing the Power of Nature & Natural Medicines to Achieve Extraordinary Health* by Christine Horner, MD, FACS, published by Basic Health Publications.**

In the 1990s, Horner was successful in pushing legislation through 35 states and then Congress requiring insurance companies to pay for breast reconstruction after mastectomy. She was named *Glamour* magazine's "Woman of the Month" and celebrated as a member of Oprah's Angel Network. In her book, Horner presents a 30-step program to help women incorporate healthy lifestyle changes to prevent and fight breast cancer naturally. She points out that the incidence of breast cancer has risen 21 percent in the last four years, which she believes is related to "greater cultural affluence." Using the metaphor of the Warrior Goddess, the book explains something that Ayurveda, an ancient system of healing, describes as "inner healing intelligence." She writes about what will poison the Warrior Goddess and what will feed her, and what she needs to thrive. The press representative is Dean Draznin at 641-472-2257, or [dean@drazinpr.com](mailto:dean@drazinpr.com).

***Reading the Rocks: The Autobiography of the Earth* by Dr. Marcia Bjornerud (NASW), published by Perseus/Basic/Westview.**

Bjornerud is professor and chair, Geology Department, Lawrence University, in Appleton Wis., and spends most of her waking hours studying, thinking and teaching about rocks. She writes, "Over more than four billion years the planet has unintentionally kept a rich and idiosyncratic journal of its past—written, very literally, in stone. It is a story that all earthlings, and not just geologists, should know how to read. The rock record makes clear that the rates of human-induced changes in some of Earth's systems equal or exceed those associated with the most devastating geologic catastrophes. Current extinction rates, as measured by species per century, probably rival those of the greatest mass extinctions of the geologic past. Present rates of change in atmosphere chemistry are likewise extreme even by geologic standards." Bjornerud points out that in a time of ubiquitous marketing and image making, science

writers may find comfort in the existence of such a ruthlessly neutral text. She adds, "The story is larger than all of us, shaped by rules that antedate and supercede every economic, legal, and religious doctrine humans have ever created, so I've tried to translate that story for people who aren't in the habit of reading rocks." Bjorneurd can be reached at [bjorenmlawrence.edu](mailto:bjorenmlawrence.edu) or 920-832-6962. The publicist is Christian Purdy at 212-340-8163 or [purdy@perseusbooks.com](mailto:purdy@perseusbooks.com).

***Adventures of Riley: Dolphins in Danger* by Amanda Lumry and Laura Hurwitz, illustrated by Sarah McIntyre, published by Eaglemont Press.**

The fourth in a series of children's books that illustrate the need in words and pictures to save the planet. In cooperation with scientists from World Wildlife Fund Conservation Society and the Smithsonian, the authors have created an adventure series designed to promote environmental education to elementary-school-age youngsters. A portion of all proceeds in the series benefit conservation efforts worldwide. The press representative is Stacey Lawson at 512-478-2028 ext. 207 or [slawson@bookpros.com](mailto:slawson@bookpros.com).

---

***New Edition***

***A Consumer's Dictionary of Cosmetic Ingredients 6th Edition* by Ruth Winter (NASW), published by Three Rivers Press/Crown.**

Cosmetics have always been a low priority at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, but now the agency's regulatory powers have been weakened to the point where they are almost nonexistent. The Cosmetics Office, which deals with the \$34 billion cosmetics and toiletries industry, has 25 full-time employees and no full-time field agents assigned to do only cosmetic work. The author points out that if a cosmetic has a systemic effect—and many do—then they are really drugs, not cosmetics, and therefore should have to be proven safe and effective. The press representative is Jay Sones at [jsones@randomhouse.com](mailto:jsones@randomhouse.com). Winter can be reached at 973-376-8385 or [ruthwrite@aol.com](mailto:ruthwrite@aol.com). ■

*Send material about new books to Ruth Winter, 44 Holly Drive, Short Hills, N.J. 07078, or [ruthwrite@aol.com](mailto:ruthwrite@aol.com). Include the name of the publicist and appropriate contact information, as well as how you prefer members get in touch with you.*

## BULLETIN BOARD

### NEW MEMBERS

**ALABAMA:** Emily Sills Delzell, UAB Health Systems; Shelli Williams\*, U of Alabama. **ARIZONA:** Daniel Jenk\*, Arizona State U; Daniel Stolte, U. of Arizona News Service. **ARKANSAS:** Laura E. Adams, UARK Univ. Relations; Susan Rogers, UARK Univ. Rels. **CALIFORNIA:** Debbie Balch\*, UC San Diego; Jon Cohen, freelance, Cardiff; Gretchen Cuda, freelance, San Francisco; Lisa De Vellis\*, UC Davis; Michael P. Gannis, UC San Diego/Supercomputer Center; Reven Hanna\*, UC Santa Cruz; Elise Kleeman\*, UC Santa

Cruz; Katherine Loftus\*, Humboldt State U; Heather Maisey\*, UCSD; Jessica Marshall\*, UC-Santa Cruz; Jennifer MacArthur\*, UC San Diego; David Nordfors, Stanford; Hugh Powell\*, UC Santa Cruz; Jane Neff Rollins, Arnell Communications, Montrose; Erica Rosenberg\*, UC Berkeley Ext.; Jessica Ruvinsky, freelance, Santa Monica; Jessica Scully, freelance, Oakland; Amy Joy Serry\*, Azusa Pacific Coll.; Eva Spiegel, ACFnewsresource, Mill Valley; Saho Tateno, freelance, UC San Diego; Kathryn Thompson\*, The Scripps Research Institute; Tom Weede, freelance, Toluca Lake.

**COLORADO:** Karen Atkison, National Renewable Energy Lab, Golden; Ewen Callaway\*, U of Washington. **CONNECTICUT:** Pamela Weintraub, freelance, Stamford. **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA:** Sadeie F. Dingfelder, *Monitor on Psychology* magazine; Kathryn Downer, American Assn. of Clinical Chemistry; Victoria Gilman, *ACS News* and *C&EN*; David Grimm, *Science* magazine; Chris Mooney, freelance, D.C.; Nancy Nelson, freelance, D.C.; Sean Potter, UCAR US Climate Change Prog.; Oliver Yun, PNAS Media & Comm. **FLORIDA:** John D. Pastor, U of Florida Public Relations. **GEORGIA:** Megan McRaine, Georgia Inst. of Technology. **IDAHO:** Steve Zollinger, Idaho National Lab, Idaho Falls. **ILLINOIS:** Kathryn Barrett\*, Northwestern U; Lisa Flanagan\*, Northwestern; Nancy F. Riggs, freelance, Mt. Zion. **INDIANA:** Hannah Schroder\*, Indiana U. **KANSAS:** Karen Henry\*, U of Kansas. **KENTUCKY:** Deb Weis, U of Kentucky Res. Comm. **MARYLAND:** Davide Castelvecchi, American Physical Society; Audrey M. Huang, freelance, Baltimore; Patrizia Krejci\*, Georgetown U; Sarah Leshner\* U of Maryland; Anna Magracheva\*, PennState; Brittany Moya Del Pino\*, Johns Hopkins U; Mayer Resnick, American Physiological Society; Jacqueline Ruthmann\*, U of Maryland; Azik Schwechter\*, Georgetown U; Chelsea Wald, Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth; Ariel Whitworth\*, Johns Hopkins U; Sarah L. Zielinski, *Journal of the NCI*. **MASSACHUSETTS:** Trina Arpin\*, Boston U; Jennifer Boyce\*, MIT; Katja Brose, Cell Press, Cambridge; Elizabeth Dougherty\*, Boston U; Leah Eisenstadt\*, Boston U; M. Cory Hatch\*, Boston U; Elana Hayaskaka\*, Boston U; Carolyn Johnson, *Boston Globe*; Jillian Lee Lokere, freelance, Westford; Emily Marcus, *Cell*; Jeremy Miller\*, Boston U; Taro Mitamura, MIT; Brad Plummer\*, Boston U; Suzanne

Which awards inspire reporters to go to exceptional lengths in covering breaking science news?



## AAAS SCIENCE JOURNALISM AWARDS

The AAAS Science Journalism Awards represent the pinnacle of achievement for professional journalists in the science writing field. The awards recognize outstanding reporting for a general audience and honor individuals (rather than institutions, publishers or employers) for their coverage of the sciences, engineering and mathematics. The awards are sponsored by Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Research & Development, LLC.

**DEADLINE:** August 1

**DETAILS:**

[www.aaas.org/SJAwards](http://www.aaas.org/SJAwards)

### U.S. CATEGORIES

Awards will be presented for U.S. submissions in the following categories:

- ▶ Large Newspapers
- ▶ Small Newspapers
- ▶ Magazines
- ▶ Television
- ▶ Radio
- ▶ Online

### NEW CATEGORY

- ▶ Children's Science News
- Open to journalists worldwide, across all news media.

SPONSORED BY



Johnson & Johnson  
PHARMACEUTICAL RESEARCH  
& DEVELOPMENT, LLC



## BULLETIN BOARD

Sataline, freelance, Cambridge; Tracy Staedter, freelance, Somerville; Siri Steiner\*, MIT. **MICHIGAN:** Robert Frederick, freelance, Ann Arbor; Catherine Shaffer, freelance, Ann Arbor; Robin Stephenson, U of Michigan Life Sciences Inst. **MINNESOTA:** Mary Hoff, freelance, Stillwater. **MISSOURI:** Kristin Bullok\*, Washington U. **NEW JERSEY:** Todd Neale\*, NYU; Michael J. Reilly\*, Rutgers; Emily Waltz\*, Columbia; Sheryl Weinstein, N.J. Inst. of Technology, Newark. **NEW MEXICO:** Sarah A. Bates, N.M. State U; Erin Lebacqz\*, U of N.M. **NEW YORK:** Lauren Aaronson\*, NYU; Erica Altman, freelance, Forest Hills; Cory Binns\*, NYU; Elizabeth Carney\* NYU; Sarah Davidson\*, Cornell; Rachel Dvoskin\*, NYU; Adriane Gelpi, Columbia U Digital Knowledge Ventures, NYC; Sonia Gulati\*, Columbia; Michael Holman\*, Columbia; Kevin MacDermott, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center Public Affairs, NYC; Anne Puduska\*, Cornell; Bruce Schechter, freelance, Brooklyn; Emily Laber-Warren, *Popular Science* magazine; Jennifer Washburn, freelance author/writer, Brooklyn; Arlene Weintraub, *Business Week*; Jennifer Wettlaufer, freelance, East Aurora. **NORTH CAROLINA:** Subhashni D.S. Joy\*, UNC-Chapel Hill; Sonya Foster Sutton\*, UNC-Chapel Hill. **OHIO:** Amber Bauer\*, Ball State U; Jeremy Hsu\*, science journalist, Shaker Hgts; Marty Shimp\*, Ohio State U. **OREGON:** John Hart\*, Clackamas Community College; Devon Schuyler, freelance, Portland; Dawn Stanton\*, Portland State U; Elizabeth Walter\*, U of Oregon. **PENNSYLVANIA:** Maria W. Anderson, *The Scientist*/freelance, Lancaster; Rebecca Hirsch, freelance, State College; Cari Anne Kornblit\*, Carnegie Mellon; Jonathan Potts, Carnegie Mellon Media Relations; Kristen Willard\*, Lehigh U.; Sarah Rothman\*, U of Pa. **RHODE ISLAND:** Allison T.

Whitney\*, Brown U. **SOUTH CAROLINA:** Czerne M. Reid, *The State*, Columbia; Lowndes F. (Rick) Stephens, U of SC School of Journ. **TENNESSEE:** Ximena Ana Levander\*, Vanderbilt U; Melissa D. Marino, Vanderbilt Public Affairs. **TEXAS:** Marcy B. Davis, freelance, Austin; Tim Green, UT-Austin Public Affairs; Brigid McHugh Sanner, freelance, Dallas; Megha Satyanarayana, UT S/W Med. Ctr. at Dallas; Adnaan Wasey\*, UT-Austin; Michele Zacks\* UT Medical Branch. **VIRGINIA:** Jeffrey L. Brown, American Society of Civil Engineers, Reston; Sarah Goforth, NSF; Laura Kennedy, free-

lance, Rixeyville; Najma Khorrami\*, Geo. Washington U; John R. Sharp II\*, Radford U; Frank Sietzen, Jr., freelance and *Capitol Outlook* column editor, Arlington; Janeen W. Stout, NSF; Megan Sullivan, Nat'l Sci. Teachers Assn.; Tamara Zenlo, the Science Advisory Board. **WASHINGTON:** Sarah DeWeerd, freelance, Seattle; Dennis Schatz, Pacific Sci. Ctr; Miryam Gordon\*, Bellevue Community College; Elizabeth Sharpe, U of Washington, Seattle. **WISCONSIN:** Katherine A. Friedrich\*, U of Wisconsin; Peter Hansen, U of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Graduate School; Scott Heiberger,

*continued on page 32*

## Congratulations



### to the winners of the 2004 AAAS Science Journalism Awards

#### Large Newspaper

Amy Ellis Nutt,  
*The Star-Ledger*

#### Small Newspaper

Melinda Burns,  
*Santa Barbara News Press*

#### Magazine

W. Wayt Gibbs,  
*Scientific American*

#### Television

Mark Davis,  
WGBH-NOVA

#### Radio

Cynthia Graber, with Christopher Ballman,  
National Public Radio's Living on Earth

#### Online

Carl Zimmer,  
Corante.com

All prize decisions are made through an objective peer-review process, directed solely by independent committees of screeners and judges. The awards are administered by AAAS and sponsored by Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Research & Development, L.L.C.

For more information, please visit:  
[www.aaas.org/aboutaaas/awards/sja/winners.shtml](http://www.aaas.org/aboutaaas/awards/sja/winners.shtml)



SPONSORED BY  
**Johnson & Johnson**  
PHARMACEUTICAL RESEARCH  
& DEVELOPMENT, L.L.C.



## BULLETIN BOARD

### AMERICAN THORACIC SOCIETY MEETING

NASW members are invited to cover ATS 2005—San Diego, the annual international conference of the American Thoracic Society, which will take place May 20-25 at the San Diego Convention Center. Information to be presented at this forum represents the latest clinical and basic research findings in pulmonary and critical-care medicine. A full-service press room will be available to journalists covering the meeting. In addition, ATS staff is prepared to offer assistance to journalists who will be covering the meeting off site. To request an advance program or additional information about covering the conference, contact Jim Augustine at 703-523-1612 or [medsci@earthlink.net](mailto:medsci@earthlink.net).

### PLANT PATHOLOGY MEETING

July 30 – Aug. 3, 2005

The American Phytopathological Society (APS) invites NASW members to cover the APS Annual Meeting at the Austin Convention Center, Austin, Texas, July 30–Aug. 3. This meeting offers a unique opportunity to meet the experts in

**newswise**  
[www.newswise.com](http://www.newswise.com)

The journalist's  
comprehensive,  
online source for  
knowledge-based news

Embargoed Stories  
Research News  
Contacts & Experts  
Calendars  
Awards, Grants & Fellowships  
e-mail: [info@newswise.com](mailto:info@newswise.com)

[www.EurekaAlert.org](http://www.EurekaAlert.org)

# The need for speed

Dozens of new press releases with breaking news are posted daily on EurekaAlert! Our email alerts make it easy for you to quickly scan each day's news and find what's most important to you. Sign-up today for free email alerts through EurekaAlert! Express at [www.EurekaAlert.org/Express.php](http://www.EurekaAlert.org/Express.php).

For more information, call 202-326-6716 or email [webmaster@eurekaalert.org](mailto:webmaster@eurekaalert.org).



**EurekaAlert!**  
AAAS

plant pathology, learn about emerging plant diseases, new agricultural biosecurity initiatives, and more. Complimentary registration is available as a media representative. To register, please contact Amy Steigman at 651-994-3802 or [asteigman@scisoc.org](mailto:asteigman@scisoc.org). Interviews of APS members can be arranged in advance. If you are unable to attend, but would like to be informed on the latest plant health research news, please sign up to receive APS news releases at [www.apsnet.org/media/press/mailform.asp](http://www.apsnet.org/media/press/mailform.asp), or contact Amy Steigman.

To place a listing in *ScienceWriters* or on the NASW Web site, contact Diane McGurgan at NASW, 304-754-5077 or [diane@nasw.org](mailto:diane@nasw.org).

### NEW MEMBERS

*continued from page 31*

Marshfield Clinic Res. Foundation, Elyse Lee\*, U of Wisconsin; Kathryn Ralford\*, U of Wisconsin. **GERMANY:** Annegret Bruening, *Berliner Zeitung*; Trista Dawson, European Molecular Bio. Lab., Heidelberg; Andrea Kinzinger, *Markische Oderzeitung*, Beeskow; Andrea Kinzinger, *Maerkische Oderzeitung*, Frankfurt; Christine-Felice Rohrs, *Der Tagesspiegel*, Berlin; Wulf Stibenz, *Saechsische Zeitung*, Dresden. **UNITED KINGDOM:** Natasha Marineau, The Environment Agency, London. ■

\*Student member