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SCIENCE-IN-SOCIETY AWARDS: KUDOS TO THE FINEST

by Carol Ezzell Webb

What are the social and legal implications when a baby conceived using artificial reproductive technology can technically have up to five parents? What impels scientists to attempt to devise ways to extend the human lifespan? How safe is the emerging science of nanotechnology? And would we be better off—as individuals and as a society—if we could take a pill to prevent the formation of memories of traumatic events such as rape or assault?

These are some of the fascinating questions addressed by the 2004 NASW Science-in-Society award winners: *New York Times* reporter Stephen S. Hall, freelance writer Robin Marantz Henig, Noel Schwerin of Backbone Media, and Alexandra Witze and Tom Siegfried of the *Dallas Morning News*.

NASW holds the competition annually to recognize "investigative and interpreting reporting about the sciences, and their impact for good and bad." The awards are judged by panels of accomplished science writing peers in each category and are unique in that the competition is not subsidized by any scientific society or commercial interest. Each winner received $1,000 and a certificate of achievement presented Feb. 16, 2005 at the NASW annual meeting in Washington, DC.

Stephen Hall led the book category with his entry, *Merchants of Immortality: Chasing the Dream of Human Life Extension* (Houghton Mifflin, 2003). The book offers an in-depth portrait of one of the most contentious areas of scientific research today: the manipulation of human cells to give them capabilities they did not have before. The judges commended the work for its compelling profiles of the ambitious, smart, and sometimes flawed individuals who are attempting to use science to set back the aging clock. They also admired Hall's ability to capture the often eccentric personalities of the researchers involved in human cloning and life extension.

Hall says he was prompted to write the book after his encounters with some of the scientists while working on an article that appeared in the *New York Times Magazine,* in January 2000. He adds that he "always enjoys getting into the early history of things," and that he was particularly gratified to be able to interview several researchers who laid the groundwork for today's aging research—including Leonard Hayflick, whose studies more than 50 years ago led to the idea of the "Hayflick limit," the number of a times a particular cell can divide before dying. Hall outlines Hayflick's recent involvement as a key player in the human cloning effort when Hayflick donated some of

Board member Carol Ezzell Webb is a freelance writer and contributing editor to Scientific American. *She is based in Austin, Tex.*

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

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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
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carol@ezzellwebb.com

Secretary
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mdichristina@sciam.com

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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

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cybrarian@nasw.org

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his skin cells to scientist-entrepreneur Michael West, of Advanced Cell Technology, for use in experiments to clone human cells for therapeutic use.

Folding historical anecdote into the fast-running story of human cloning was an interesting challenge, according to Hall. Each time he writes a book (*Merchants of Immortality* is his fourth), he says, "I tell myself I'm not going to do a book on something until I know the end of the story….and every time I break that rule."

Robin Henig's winning magazine article is "The Quest to Forget" (*New York Times Magazine*, April 4, 2004). Henig, a freelance writer and author of eight books, was drawn to the subject of her winning magazine entry after reading a 2003 report by the President's Council on Bioethics. The report explored the new field of "therapeutic forgetting," in which physicians are beginning to prescribe psychoactive drugs following a traumatic event to prevent a patient from consolidating potentially debilitating memories of his or her experience. Henig initially approached Roger Pitman of Harvard Medical School—a pioneer in the therapy—with the goal of writing a profile.

After spending time with Pitman and gaining his trust, Henig convinced him to introduce her to several of his patients, including Kathleen, a victim of a carjacking. The personal stories helped Henig expand the idea into a full-fledged article worthy of the Science-in-Society Award.

What particularly intrigued Henig was the effect that blocking the formation of bad memories might have on the rest of someone's life—and indeed, on society at large. She also found that bioethicists are bothered by the potential of "therapeutic forgetting" to erase remorse in criminals. "It got [the panel] very worked up," says Henig. "Council chairman Leon Cass [of the University of Chicago] feared there might be people who go out and rape someone one night and then take a pill the next day and not feel guilty."

Noel Schwerin's winning television entry, "Bloodlines: Technology Hits Home" (PBS, June 10, 2003), probes the legal and ethical dilemmas of six case studies in modern genetics and reproductive technology, several of which have reached the courts. Three of the situations question who is legally a parent: Is an "intended father" responsible for child support after he and the "intended mother" divorce, even though their child was conceived using donor sperm and a donor egg, and the baby was carried by a surrogate mother? When one partner in a lesbian couple carries the pregnancy resulting from the other's donated egg, are they both legal parents? And if "intended parents" divorce and decide they no longer want a child while the surrogate mother is still pregnant, who is responsible for the baby once it's born? Three other segments highlight a case of genetic discrimination in the workplace after workers were tested without their knowledge, a researcher applying for a patent on a human-chimpanzee hybrid, and a patient with Parkinson's disease who has received injections of pig cells in his brain.

Schwerin runs her production company, Backbone Media, as a not-for-profit. "You never really turn a profit in my business," she says. "Since what I do is educational, it's easier for me to get funding if I'm a nonprofit." She adds that non-profit status also helps her credibility with sources—especially those living through the ethical dilemmas she explores in "Bloodlines."

The Science-in-Society judges praised Schwerin's ability to get the people involved in the ethical and legal cases she focuses on to speak so candidly and openly—something she says took a lot of preparation. "I spend a lot of time with my subjects before I put a camera in front of their faces," Schwerin says. For instance, she spent years talking to the "intended mother" in the child-support case before the woman agreed to go on camera.

Alexandra Witze and Tom Siegfried shared the newspaper prize for their three-part series "Science's Big Unknown" (*Dallas Morning News*, June 2, 2003). Few ethical dilemmas are posed by the subject of Witze's and Siegfried's winning newspaper entry on nanotechnology, but they were at the head of the pack among major media outlets in questioning the technology's health and environmental safety. The judges congratulated the pair for putting together a comprehensive package on nanotech that ran on a single day: a Page One story about the emerging studies showing that tiny nanotech particles can easily enter cells, and a backgrounder and essay on nanotech that appeared in the paper's science section.

Witze says that she and Siegfried were ahead of the curve in the nanotech-safety story because they were tracking the possibility of nanoterrorism following 9/11.

Dallas Morning News *science section folds*

In October 2004, the *Dallas Morning News* eliminated its science section, laying off Tom Siegfried and two other science writers. Alexandra Witze and two part-time science writers now report to the Sunday editor. Siegfried, the former editor of the science section, says the reorganization will probably reduce the ability of the remaining staff to put out an award-winning package such as the nanotech series. "You can only do this type of thing in an environment in which you have the time and the freedom to pursue tough subjects," he said, "and you need the specialized knowledge of science writers to cover these types of topics."

After a reporting visit to nanotech researchers at Rice University, though, she was persuaded the more immediate story was nanotech's potential effects on human health and ecosystems. "I wanted to explore what scientists were doing, and whether it was practical or even potentially dangerous," she says.

This year the judges did not name a winner in either the radio or Web categories. For more on the winners and their entries, visit **www.nasw.org/mem-maint/awards/**. ■

SCIENTIFIC FRINGE TAKES ADVANTAGE OF 'BALANCED' REPORTING

by Chris Mooney

On May 22, 2003, the *Los Angeles Times* printed a front-page story by Scott Gold, its respected Houston bureau chief, about the passage of a law in Texas requiring abortion doctors to warn women that the procedure might cause breast cancer. Virtually no mainstream scientist believes that the so-called ABC link actually exists—only anti-abortion activists do. Accordingly, Gold's article noted right off the bat that the American Cancer Society discounts the "alleged link" and that anti-abortionists have pushed for "so-called counseling" laws only after failing in their attempts to have abortion banned. Gold also reported that the National Cancer Institute had convened "more than a hundred of the world's experts" to assess the ABC theory, which they rejected. In comparison to these scientists, Gold noted, the author of the Texas counseling bill—who called the ABC issue "still disputed"—had "a professional background in property management."

Gold's piece was hard-hitting but accurate. The scientific consensus is quite firm that abortion does not cause breast cancer. If reporters want to take science and its conclusions seriously, their reporting should reflect this reality—no matter what anti-abortionists say.

But what happened next illustrates one reason journalists have such a hard time calling it like they see it on science issues. In an internal memo exposed by the Web site LAobserved.com, the *Times*'s editor, John Carroll, singled out Gold's story for harsh criticism, claiming it vindicated critics who accuse the paper of liberal bias. Carroll specifically criticized Gold's "so-called counseling" line ("a phrase that is loaded with derision") and his "professional background in property management" quip ("seldom will you read a cheaper shot than this"). "The story makes a strong case that the link between abortion and breast cancer is widely discounted among researchers," Carroll wrote, "but I wondered as I read it whether somewhere there might exist some credible scientist who believes in it. … Apparently the scientific argument for the anti-abortion side is so absurd that we don't need to waste our readers' time with it."

Gold declined to comment specifically on Carroll's memo, except to say that it prompted "a sound and good discussion of the standards that we all take very seriously." For his part, Carroll—now editing his third newspaper—is hardly so naïve as to think journalistic "balance" is synonymous with accuracy. In an interview, he nevertheless defended the memo, observing that "reporters have to make judgments about the validity of ideas" but that "a reporter has to be broad-minded in being open to ideas that aren't necessarily shared by the crowd he or she happens to be hanging around with." Carroll adds that in his view, Gold needed to find a credible scientist to defend the ABC claim, rather than merely quoting a legislator and then exposing that individual's lack of scientific background. "You have an obligation to find a scientist, and if the scientist has something to say, then you can subject the scientist's views to rigorous examination," Carroll says.

The trouble is, the leading proponent of the idea that abortions cause breast cancer, Dr. Joel Brind of Baruch College at the City University of New York, underwent a pro-life religious conversion that left him feeling "compelled to use science for its noblest, life-saving purpose," as he put it in *Physician*, a magazine published by a conservative religious group called Focus on the Family. Brind's dedication to the ABC theory has flown in the face of repeated negative critiques of that theory by his scientific peers. When the National Cancer Institute convened the world's experts to assess the question in February 2003, Brind was the only dissenter from the group's conclusions.

…an article on "intellectual design" so artificially "balanced" it was downright inaccurate and misleading.

Nevertheless, a later article by Gold suggests he may have taken Carroll's lesson to heart (though Gold says the piece "certainly wasn't a direct response, or an attempt to change anything or compensate" following Carroll's memo). On November 6, 2003, Gold reported on a push in Texas to revise the way biology textbooks teach the scientific theory of evolution, which some religious conservatives don't accept. Gold opened with a glowing profile of one William Dembski, described as a "scientist by trade" but "an evangelical Christian at

Chris Mooney is a senior correspondent for the American Prospect.

heart who is convinced that some biological mechanisms are too complex to have been created without divine guidance." But according to his Web site, Dembski is a philosopher and mathematician, not a biologist. Moreover, he's a leader of the new "intelligent design" crusade against Darwin's theory, an updated form of creationism that evolutionary biologists have broadly denounced. (He recently took a job running the Center for Science and Theology at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.) The American Association for the Advancement of Science, the world's largest scientific society and publisher of *Science*, the highest-circulation general scientific journal, has firmly stated that proponents have "failed to offer credible scientific evidence to support their claim" that the intelligent design theory "undermines the current scientifically accepted theory of evolution."

Scott Gold had it exactly right on abortion and breast cancer. Then he produced an article on "intelligent design" so artificially "balanced" it was downright inaccurate and misleading.

The basic notion that journalists should go beyond mere "balance" in search of the actual truth hardly represents a novel insight. This magazine [*Columbia Journalism Review*], along with its political Web site, Campaign Desk, has been part of a rising chorus against a prevalent but lazy form of journalism that makes no attempt to dig beneath competing claims. But for journalists raised on objectivity and tempered by accusations of bias, knowing that phony balance can create distortion is one thing and taking steps to fix the reporting is another.

Political reporting hardly presents the only challenge for journalists seeking to go beyond he said/she said accounts, or even the most difficult one. Instead, that distinction may be reserved for media coverage of contested scientific issues, many of them with major policy ramifications, such as global climate change. After all, the journalistic norm of balance has no corollary in the world of science. On the contrary, scientific theories and interpretations survive or perish depending upon whether they're published in highly competitive journals that practice strict quality control, whether the results upon which they're based can be replicated by other scientists, and ultimately whether they win over scientific peers. When consensus builds, it is based on repeated testing and retesting of an idea.

Journalists face a number of pressures that can prevent them from accurately depicting competing scientific claims in terms of their credibility within the scientific community as a whole. First, reporters must often deal with editors who reflexively cry out for "balance." Meanwhile, determining how much weight to give different sides in a scientific debate requires considerable expertise on the issue at hand. Few journalists have real scientific knowledge, and even beat reporters who know a great deal about certain scientific issues may know little about other ones they're suddenly asked to cover.

Moreover, the question of how to substitute accuracy for mere "balance" in science reporting has become ever more pointed as journalists have struggled to cover the Bush administration, which scientists have widely accused of scientific distortions. As the Union of Concerned Scientists, an alliance of citizens and scientists, and other critics have noted, Bush administration statements and actions have often given privileged status to a fringe scientific view over a well-documented, extremely robust mainstream conclusion. Journalists have thus had to decide whether to report on a he said/she said battle between scientists and the White House—which has had very few scientific defenders—or get to the bottom of each case of alleged distortion and report on who's actually right.

…Bush administration statements and actions have often given privileged status to a fringe scientific view…

No wonder scientists have often denounced the press for giving credibility to fringe scientific viewpoints. And without a doubt, the topic on which scientists have most vehemently decried both the media and the Bush administration is global warming. While some scientific uncertainty remains in the climate field, the most rigorous peer-reviewed assessments—produced roughly every five years by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—have cemented a consensus view that human greenhouse gas emissions are probably (i.e., the conclusion has a fairly high degree of scientific certainty) helping to fuel the greenhouse effect and explain the observed planetary warming of the past fifty years. Yet the Bush administration has consistently sought to undermine this position by hyping lingering uncertainties and seeking to revise government scientific reports. It has also relied upon energy interests and a small cadre of dissenting scientists (some of whom are funded, in part, by industry) in formulating climate policy.

The centrality of the climate change issue to the scientific critique of the press does not arise by accident. Climate change has mind-bogglingly massive ramifications, not only for the future of our carbon-based economy but for the planet itself. Energy interests wishing to stave off action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions have a documented history of supporting the small group of scientists who question the human role in causing climate change—as well as consciously strategizing about

how to sow confusion on the issue and sway journalists.

In 1998, for instance, John H. Cushman, Jr., of the *New York Times* exposed an internal American Petroleum Institute memo outlining a strategy to invest millions to "maximize the impact of scientific views consistent with ours with Congress, the media and other key audiences." Perhaps most startling, the memo cited a need to "recruit and train" scientists "who do not have a long history of visibility and/or participation in the climate change debate" to participate in media outreach and counter the mainstream scientific view. This seems to signal an awareness that after a while, journalists catch on to the connections between contrarian scientists and industry. But in the meantime, a window of opportunity apparently exists when reporters can be duped by fresh faces.

"There's a very small set of people" who question the consensus, says *Science*'s executive editor-in-chief, Donald Kennedy. "And there are a great many thoughtful reporters in the media who believe that in order to produce a balanced story, you've got to pick one commentator from side A and one commentator from side B. I call it the two-card Rolodex problem."

The Stanford climatologist Stephen Schneider echoes this concern. A scientist whose interactions with the media on the subject of climate change span decades, Schneider has reflected at length on the subject, especially in his 1989 book *Global Warming*. Schneider's climate-change Web site also devotes a section to what he calls "Mediarology," where he notes that in science debates "there are rarely just two polar opposite sides, but rather a spectrum of potential outcomes, oftentimes accompanied by a considerable history of scientific assessment of the relative credibility of these many possibilities. A climate scientist faced with a reporter locked into the 'get both sides' mindset risks getting his or her views stuffed into one of two boxed storylines: 'we're worried' or 'it will all be okay.' And sometimes, these two 'boxes' are misrepresentative; a mainstream, well-established consensus may be 'balanced' against the opposing views of a few extremists, and to the uninformed, each position seems equally credible."

Academics have studied media coverage of climate change, and the results confirm climate scientists' longstanding complaints. In a recent paper published in the journal Global Environmental Change, the scholars Maxwell T. Boykoff and Jules M. Boykoff analyzed coverage of the issue in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Los Angeles Times* between 1988 and 2002. During this fourteen-year period, climate scientists successfully forged a powerful consensus on human-caused climate change. But reporting in these four major papers did not at all reflect this consensus.

The Boykoffs analyzed a random sample of 636 articles. They found that a majority—52.7 percent—gave "roughly equal attention" to the scientific consensus view that humans contribute to climate change and to the energy-industry-supported view that natural fluctuations suffice to explain the observed warming. By comparison, just 35.3 percent of articles emphasized the scientific consensus view while still presenting the other side in a subordinate fashion. Finally, 6.2 percent emphasized the industry-supported view, and a mere 5.9 percent focused on the consensus view without bothering to provide the industry/skeptic counterpoint.

…a window of opportunity apparently exists when reporters can be duped by fresh faces.

Most intriguing, the Boykoffs' study found a shift in coverage between 1988—when climate change first garnered wide media coverage—and 1990. During that period, journalists broadly moved from focusing on scientists' views of climate change to providing "balanced" accounts. During this same period, the Boykoffs noted, climate change became highly politicized and a "small group of influential spokespeople and scientists emerged in the news" to question the mainstream view that industrial emissions are warming the planet. The authors conclude that the US "prestige-press" has produced "informationally biased coverage of global warming . . . hidden behind the veil of journalistic balance."

In a rich irony, a UPI report on August 30, 2004, about the Boykoffs' study covered it in—that's right—a thoroughly "balanced" fashion. The article gave considerable space to the viewpoint of Frank Maisano, a former spokesman for the industry-sponsored Global Climate Coalition and a professional media consultant, who called the Boykoffs' contentions "absolutely outrageous" and proceeded to reiterate many of the dubious criticisms of mainstream climate science for which the "skeptic" camp is so notorious. In the process, the UPI piece epitomized all the pathologies of US coverage of climate change—pathologies that aren't generally recapitulated abroad. Media research suggests that US journalists cover climate change very differently from their European counterparts, often lending much more credence to the viewpoints of "skeptics" like Maisano.

In an interview, Maxwell Boykoff—an environmental studies PhD candidate at the University of California at Santa Cruz—noted that if there's one American journalist who cuts against the grain in covering the climate issue, it's Andrew C. Revkin of the *New York Times*. That's revealing, because Revkin happens to be the only reporter at any of the major newspapers studied who covers "global environmental change"

as his exclusive beat, which Revkin says means writing about climate change "close to half" of the time. Revkin has also been covering global warming since 1988 and has written a book on the topic. (This fall he began teaching environmental reporting as an adjunct at Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism.)

Revkin agrees with the basic thrust of the Boykoff study, but he also notes that the analysis focuses only on the quantitative aspect of climate-change coverage, rather than more subtle qualitative questions such as how reporters "characterize the voices" of the people they quote.

After all, the issue isn't just how many column inches journalists give to the perspective of climate-change "skeptics" versus the mainstream view. It's also how they identify these contrarian figures, many of whom have industry ties. Take a January 8, 2004, article by the *Washington Post*'s Guy Gugliotta, reporting on a study in the journal *Nature* finding that global warming could "drive 15 to 37 percent of living species toward extinction by mid-century." Gugliotta's story hardly suffered from phony balance. But when it did include a "skeptic" perspective—in a thoroughly subordinate fashion in the ninth paragraph—the skeptic's industry ties went unmentioned:

One skeptic, William O'Keefe, president of the George C. Marshall Institute, a conservative science policy organization, criticized the *Nature* study, saying that the research 'ignored species' ability to adapt to higher temperatures' and assumed that technologies will not arise to reduce emissions.

What Gugliotta didn't say is this: the Marshall Institute receives substantial support from oil giant ExxonMobil, a leading funder of think tanks, frequently conservative in orientation, that question the scientific consensus on climate change. Moreover, O'Keefe himself has chaired the anti-Kyoto Protocol Global Climate Coalition, and served as executive vice president and chief operating officer of the American Petroleum Institute. Senate documents from 2001 through 2003 also list him as a registered lobbyist for ExxonMobil. (To be fair, when I discussed this matter with O'Keefe while working on a previous article, he said that he registers as a lobbyist "out of an abundance of caution" and keeps his ExxonMobil and Marshall Institute work "separate.")

Asked about all of this, Gugliotta said he simply didn't know of O'Keefe's industry connections at the time. He said he considered O'Keefe a "reasoned skeptic" who provided a measured perspective from the other side of the issue. Fair enough. His industry ties don't necessarily detract from that, but readers still should know about them. The point isn't to single out Gugliotta—any number of other examples could be found. And such omissions don't merely occur on the news pages. Some major op-ed pages also appear to think that to fulfill their duty of providing a range of views, they should publish dubious contrarian opinion pieces on climate change even when those pieces are written by nonscientists. For instance, on July 7, 2003, the *Washington Post* published a revisionist op-ed on climate science by James Schlesinger, a former secretary of both energy and defense, and a former director of Central Intelligence. "In recent years the inclination has been to attribute the warming we have lately experienced to a single dominant cause—the increase in greenhouse gases," wrote Schlesinger. "Yet climate has always been changing—and sometimes the swings have been rapid." The clear implication was that scientists don't know enough about the causes of climate change to justify strong pollution controls.

That's not how most climatologists feel, but then Schlesinger is an economist by training, not a climatologist. Moreover, his *Washington Post* byline failed to note that he sits on the board of directors of Peabody Energy, the largest coal company in the world, and has since 2001. Peabody has resisted the push for mandatory controls on greenhouse gas emissions, such as those that would be required by the Kyoto Protocol. In a 2001 speech, the Peabody executive John Wootten argued that "there remains great uncertainty in the scientific understanding of climate," and that "imposition of immediate constraints on emissions from fossil-fuel use is not warranted." Funny, that's pretty much what Schlesinger argued.

"The media have shown themselves incapable of covering the key social and intellectual phenomena of the 21st century, namely the revolution in genetics and biology."

—Arthur Caplan, biomedical ethicist

For another group of scientists, the grievances with the press have emerged more recently, but arguably with far greater force. That's because on an issue of great concern to these scientists—the various uses and abuses of somatic cell nuclear transfer, or cloning—journalists have swallowed the claims of the scientific fringe hook, line, and sinker.

Consider the great 2002 cloning hoax. In the media lull following Christmas, one Brigitte Boisselier—the "scientific director" of Clonaid, a company linked to the UFO-obsessed Raelian sect, and already a semi-celebrity who had been profiled in the *New York Times Magazine*—announced the birth of the world's first cloned baby. At her press conference, covered live by CNN, MSNBC,

and Fox, Boisselier could not even produce a picture of the alleged child—"Eve"—much less independent scientific verification of her claims. She instead promised proof within eight or nine days. Needless to say, the whole affair should have made the press wary.

Nevertheless, a media frenzy ensued, with journalists occasionally mocking and questioning the Raelians while allowing their claims to drive the coverage. CNN's medical correspondent, Sanjay Gupta, provided a case in point. When he interviewed Boisselier following her press conference, Gupta called Clonaid a group with "the capacity to clone" and told Boisselier, credulously, "We are certainly going to be anxiously awaiting to see some of the proof from these independent scientists next week."

…one commentator from side A and one commentator from side B…(is) the two-card Rolodex problem.

Perhaps most outspoken in criticizing the press during the Clonaid fiasco was Arthur Caplan, the University of Pennsylvania biomedical ethicist. As one of the nation's most quoted bioethicists, Caplan had the advantage of actual access to the media during the feeding frenzy. Yet that familiarity made little difference. As Caplan complained in an MSNBC.com column following the Raelians' announcement, no one wanted to listen to his skepticism because that would have required dropping the story: "As soon as I heard about the Raelians' cloning claim, I knew it was nonsense," wrote Caplan. "The media have shown themselves incapable of covering the key social and intellectual phenomena of the 21st century, namely the revolution in genetics and biology."

Caplan observed that Clonaid had no scientific peer-reviewed publications to prove its techniques were up to snuff, and that cloning had barely worked in live animal species, and then only after countless initial failures. Nevertheless, Clonaid had implausibly claimed a stunning success rate—five pregnancies in ten attempts—in its experiments.

The Clonaid fiasco shows the media at their absolute worst in covering scientific issues. Reviewing the coverage two years later is a painful exercise. As even Gupta later admitted, "I think if we had known… that there was going to be no proof at this press conference, I think that we probably would have pulled the plug." Later on, even the Raelians themselves reportedly laughed at how easy it was to get free publicity.

But this wasn't just fun and games. The political consequences of the press's cloning coverage were considerable. Widespread fear of human cloning inevitably lends strength to sweeping legislation that would ban all forms of cloning, despite the fact that many scientists think the cloning of embryos for research purposes holds significant medical promise; it would allow for the creation of embryonic-stem-cell lines genetically matched to individual patients. Thus, on an issue where one side of the debate thrives on fear, the media delivered exactly what these cloning-ban advocates desired. Where the press's unjustifiable addiction to "balance" on climate change produces a political stalemate on a pressing issue of global consequence, its addiction to cloning cranks provided a potent political weapon to the enemies of crucial research.

None of those examples of poorly "balanced" science reporting arise from precisely the same set of journalistic shortcomings. In Scott Gold's case at the *Los Angeles Times*, he appears to have known the scientific issues perfectly well. That gave his writing an authority that set off warning bells in an editor wary of bias. That's very different from the Clonaid example, where sheer credulousness among members of the media—combined with sensationalism and a slow news period—were the problem. And that's different still from the problem of false balance in the media coverage of climate change in the US, which has been chronic for more than a decade.

Yet in each case, the basic journalistic remedy would probably be the same. As a general rule, journalists should treat fringe scientific claims with considerable skepticism, and find out what major peer-reviewed papers or assessments have to say about them. Moreover, they should adhere to the principle that the more outlandish or dramatic the claim, the more skepticism it warrants. The *Los Angeles Times*'s Carroll observes that "every good journalist has a bit of a contrarian in his soul," but it is precisely this impulse that can lead reporters astray. The fact is, nonscientist journalists can all too easily fall for scientific-sounding claims that they can't adequately evaluate on their own.

That doesn't mean that scientific consensus is right in every instance. There are famous examples, in fact, of when it was proved wrong: Galileo comes to mind, as does a lowly patent clerk named Einstein. In the vast majority of modern cases, however, scientific consensus can be expected to hold up under scrutiny precisely because it was reached through a lengthy and rigorous process of professional skepticism and criticism. At the very least, journalists covering science-based policy debates should familiarize themselves with this professional proving ground, learn what it says about the relative merits of competing claims, and "balance" their reports accordingly. ■

"Blinded By Science: How 'Balanced' Coverage Lets the Scientific Fringe Hijack Reality," Columbia Journalism Review, *Nov./Dec. 2004.*

REPORTER GETS PAST VELVET ROPES AT NOBEL PRIZE CEREMONIES

by Emily Sohn

I was halfway through my appetizer when the lights went dim in the Blue Hall—an ornate and cavernous room in the Stockholm City Hall. A spotlight scanned the elegant brick space and its 1,300 well-dressed guests, then came to rest on two opera singers. They stood on a grand stairway. Behind them was the sparkling Golden Hall, with its 18 million mosaic pieces of glass and gold. The performance that followed, "Homage to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart," included an operatic rendition of a refrain from the Simon and Garfunkel song "The 59th Street Bridge Song (Feeling Groovy)." When the singing ended, the lights came back on. We all picked up our forks and resumed eating.

"Just another day at the Nobel prize ceremonies," I said, before washing down a bite of lobster-tomato pâté with a sip of Dom Perignon, vintage 1995.

As a journalist who covers science and health, usually for publications aimed at young people, I am often surprised at the access I have to people and places. But the Nobel prize ceremonies are a special case. The prizes are the most coveted awards in science, literature, economics, and social accomplishment. To win one of the three science prizes given each year, researchers must shake the foundations of what we know, usually by creating a fundamental shift in the way we think about things. "The world should not be the same after the discovery as it was before," says Hans Jörnvall, secretary of the Nobel Committee for Physiology or Medicine.

Scientists dream of winning these prizes, which set them up with eternal honor and a comfortable sum of money—$1.3 million this year—to be split among the winners in each category. Almost as intensely, Swedes dream of attending the awards ceremony and the grand party that follows.

Just as people in the United States gather around their television sets every February to watch the Academy Awards ceremony honoring stars of the film industry, everyone in Sweden is glued to the television each Dec. 10, when King Karl XVI Gustav hands out the Nobel prizes in chemistry, physics, medicine or physiology, economics, and literature. (The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded the same day in Oslo.)

In both the Oscar and Nobel ceremonies, glamour is a major draw. There are famous people, gorgeous dresses, and, perhaps most appealing of all, lots of exclusivity.

Emily Sohn writes for Science News for Kids *and covers health and science for a variety of other publications.*

Journalism, in my experience, is not a high-glamour job, and I am not a high-glamour person. I sometimes work at home in my pajamas. I don't know how to put on eyeliner. I've never yearned to attend a ball. Nevertheless, I was delighted to find myself scouring the streets of Stockholm last Dec. 8, looking for the perfect gown to wear to the Nobel festivities.

I had been very lucky to score a seat. I was in Stockholm that week to write about a group of young scientists who would be attending the Nobel events as part of an annual program called the Stockholm International Youth Science Seminar (SIYSS). The program's 24 participants came from 15 countries. All were between the ages of 18 and 24, and each had either won national or international science fairs or been selected by their universities or countries on the basis of the strength of their research. The organizers of SIYSS agreed to let me embed myself with the group for a busy week that included meetings with members of Nobel committees, tours of science institutions, and ballroom dancing lessons (for the thrilling details of that last item, go to **www.sciencenewsforkids.org/articles/20050105/Feature1.asp**).

When it came to getting a ticket for the actual festivities, however, I was on my own. My only hope was an appeal to the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and everyone I spoke to in Sweden made it clear that my chances were extremely slim. More than 70 members of the foreign press applied in 2004, I was later told. Only 12 would be allowed in. A week before my plane left for Stockholm, I learned that I was one of them.

Once in Sweden, with a ball gown picked out and altered to fit me—at 5 feet 2 inches, I'm smaller than the average Swede—I joined the young women in my group for a morning at the hair salon. A hairdresser there invested an entire can of hairspray on my do. Then, we returned to our rooms at the local youth hostel to apply makeup and other finishing touches, while the young men dressed in tails. At 3 p.m., a line of white limos arrived to drive us around Stockholm, in style, until 4:30 p.m., when the ceremonies would begin.

By the time we arrived at the Stockholm Concert Hall, a few minutes from the lavish city hall where we would end the evening, it was as dark as only a Scandinavian winter afternoon can be. People in heavy coats lined up behind barricades on the street, struggling to get glimpses of the rich and famous emerging from their limos. A helicopter hovered overhead. For the first time in my life, I felt like a movie star.

At the concert hall ceremony, I sat on the edge of my assigned seat in the front row of the second balcony. After a formal procession, the royal family took seats onstage opposite the new Nobel laureates, with the Nobel Committee members behind them. Bengt Samuelsson, chairman of the board of the Nobel Foundation, opened

with a speech about women in science and culture. He had been inspired by the unusual cluster of 3 women among the 12 winners of Nobel prizes this year.

"If we include the Nobel prizes in literature and peace," Samuelsson said, "31 of all 705 Nobel prizes awarded between 1901 and 2003 were given to women—that is, a bit more than 4 percent." Part of the problem, he said, is that the science prizes tend to go to people who made their discoveries several decades back. Women simply didn't have the same opportunities in science in the 1970s and 1980s as they do today, he said.

Samuelsson continued, "If the history of the Nobel prize during its first century was a reflection of the 19th- and early 20th-century values, maybe this year's awards are a glimpse of the changes we will see during this century."

The award for each discipline began with an introduction in Swedish by a member of the appropriate selection committees. One by one, each winner then walked to the center of the stage to meet the king, who walked from the opposite side of the stage.

How do you keep 1,300 plates of ice cream from melting…That is one of the many unanswered questions that contribute to the Nobel mystique.

Whenever the king stood, so did all the rest of us. After accepting his or her award, each laureate bowed to the king, turned and bowed to the committee, then faced the audience and bowed again, at which point we clapped. The bows were accompanied by a trumpet fanfare. Between each round of awards and the next speech, everyone sat down—king first—for a symphony performance.

Linda B. Buck of the University of Washington, in Seattle, earned an especially long round of applause as she was awarded the prize in physiology or medicine.

When the ceremony was over, shuttle buses carried us to the city hall. I checked my coat, stood in a long line for the ladies' room, then found my assigned seat at a table that included reporters from the Associated Press, Agence France-Presse, Reuters, Norwegian television, and an Israeli university. Altogether, there were 65 tables set with about 7,000 pieces of porcelain and 10,000 pieces of silverware. Surrounded by nearly 10,000 flowers, we drank out of 5,000 glasses. I counted seven beverages, including the champagne, a red Château Corbin Michotte 1993, a white Château Raymond-Lafon 1998, and an after-dinner cognac.

Everything about the exquisite meal is kept secret until the guests are seated and, even then, reading the menu requires knowledge of French. I was so taken by the atmosphere and conversation that I barely remember the main course—a filet of veal in red wine (a vegetarian version for me) with a mixed array of tubers—but the dessert was a tour de force. It arrived with a flourish, introduced by the second half of the opera performance. The final song turned into a march of a throng of singers, followed by all 200 waiters descending the stairs in unison. Each server carried a tray of almond mousse topped with a delicate layer of white chocolate and a scoop of almond ice cream, garnished with tart yellow cloudberries, and a sprig of dark chocolate.

How do you keep 1,300 plates of ice cream from melting during such a grand march? That is one of the many unanswered questions that contribute to the Nobel mystique.

By this point in the evening, after nearly four hours of eating and drinking, I had almost forgotten why we were all there—to celebrate some of the greatest minds in the world. But before we could float up to the Golden Hall for dancing and more after-dinner drinks, each solo laureate or a member of a Nobel-winning team delivered a brief speech of thanks.

David J. Gross, one of the three winners of the physics prize, wondered whether such lavish celebrations could be sustained. "Fortunately, nature is as generous with its problems as Nobel was with his fortune. The more we know, the more we are aware of what we know not. Indeed, the most important product of knowledge is ignorance," Gross said. "I am happy to report that there is no evidence that we are running out of our most important resource—ignorance. How lucky for science. How lucky for scientists. And how lucky for the Nobel Foundation."

Richard Axel of Columbia University, the cowinner of the prize in physiology or medicine, spoke about how winning a Nobel prize had made him appreciate how much he loves what he does. Axel and Buck were honored for major advances in understanding the human sense of smell.

"While performing these experiments," Axel said, "in watching the data unfold remarkably before our eyes, it seemed inconceivable that we could experience a moment of greater joy or fulfillment. But tonight we stand with you, with their majesties the king and queen, with fellow scientists, with honored guests and friends, amidst the lights, the music, the trumpets, the wine, and feel an affection that adds a new and very human dimension to our science. In the midst of this joy of these festivities, I raise my glass to celebrate you."

As a journalist, I'll drink to that. ■

"Nobel Celebrations: An Elegant Turn with Science's Elite," Science News*, Jan. 22, 2005.*

PHOTO BY ANDREW SKOLNICK

HOWARD J. LEWIS A REMEMBRANCE

by Lynne Friedmann

Howard J. Lewis, 84, a journalist, policy adviser, National Academy of Sciences executive, and longtime editor of *ScienceWriters*, died of cancer Oct. 13, 2004, at his Bethesda home.

As a science journalist and the director of the office of information for the National Academy of Sciences, Howard worked to ensure that journalists in the United States and abroad had access to important scientific information. He also raised standards for those who work to communicate vital, albeit difficult, information about science and public policy.

Howard is best known for insisting that journalists be included at the 1975 Asilomar Conference on Recombinant DNA, an event that was later described as "the Woodstock of molecular biology." The conference grew out of concerns by scientists in the early 1970s after experiments suggested it was possible to clone DNA segments from virtually any organism. The landmark conference established a set of safety guidelines for laboratory practices. More importantly, Asilomar set a precedent for journalists who sat in on all meetings and were free to describe, comment on, and criticize all the deliberations, bickering, accusations, wavering views, and final consensus.

Paul Berg, a Nobel laureate for chemistry and one of the conference organizers, wrote later: "The public's trust was undeniably increased by the fact that more than 10 percent of the participants were from the news media."

Howard Lewis was born in Easton, Pa. After graduating from Lehigh University in 1940, he worked as a reporter for the *Bethlehem* (Pa.) *Globe-Times* and received a graduate degree in journalism from Columbia University.

During World War II, he served in the US Army. As a staff sergeant and squad leader, he was awarded the Bronze Star for meritorious action during the Allies' final push across the Danube.

After the war, he became editor of the *New York Herald Tribune's This Week Magazine* from 1946 to 1949 and then editor of Argosy, where he worked from 1949 to 1954. From 1954 to 1957, he was a freelance writer specializing in science and technology.

The following is an insightful and prophetic excerpt from a letter Howard wrote to his father in the mid-1950s.

> One thing I am increasingly aware of is that I suffer somewhat from a split in loyalties. I mean in the field of science writing. A great deal of the time scientists and writers are suspicious of one another—the scientist fights for accuracy and clarity and the writer fights for reader-interest. Too often, because of the highly spiced diet now being offered by most magazines, the two aims are in direct conflict. The writer usually wins because he has the last word. What I am trying to say is that all my training has been as a writer and all my loyalty seems to be with the scientists. As a writer, I think how "can I make this a more salable story;" as a sci-ophile, "I think how can I get closer to the truth." When I try to do both at once, I get a terrible headache. When I start to compromise, I shake with anxiety. So I thought maybe the best thing for me was to go about it from the other side. Instead of trying to get a job with the outlet and hunt up the scientists, how would it be if I got a job with the scientists and then hunted up the outlets? In other words, public relations for a body of scientists. That would break down into universities, industries, and the government. I think I will begin to look into the matter in that order.

Howard got his chance in 1957 when the Academy hired him to create its first office of information. Not only did Howard define the job he then got himself hired to fill it and served as its director until his retirement in 1983.

During his years at the Academy, Howard served on numerous advisory boards, including the AAAS science and policy programs. He founded and edited Public Science, a monthly newsletter sponsored by the Science and Public Policy Studies Group (based at MIT), and was an editorial and public affairs consultant to a

Lynne Friedmann is editor of ScienceWriters.

United Nations conference on the application of science and technology for less-developed nations.

After Howard left the Academy he assumed editorship of *ScienceWriters*. Previously a hastily assembled newsletter devoted mainly to job changes and insider gossip, under Howard's guidance the new publication resembled more of a society journal, with thoughtful articles and in-depth analysis of the sometimes arcane craft of science journalism, and a strong emphasis on professional development.

I first met Howard in the late 1980s when I started contributing articles to *ScienceWriters*. Howard was a masterful editor who more than once he had me reaching for the dictionary to look up an erudite word or foreign phrase he'd effortlessly tossed in that nailed a point I'd been struggling to make.

When Howard stepped down as editor in 2000—shortly after his 80th birthday—he wrote in a farewell message to NASW members, "To discover so late in life that something you enjoy more than any previous employment also evokes more appreciation than any other is gratifying indeed." ■

*(*Washington Post *obituary, Lewis family documents, and* ScienceWriters *archives were used in preparing this story.)*

HOWARD LEWIS AND ISWA MEMORIES

by Jim Cornell

When I first met Howard and, at his urging, became involved with the International Science Writers Association (ISWA), that organization was often dismissed as just a group of aging journalists who liked free trips to exotic places where they could indulge in the local cuisine.

In fact, Howard and I certainly fit one part of that description.

He surely loved the sumptuous and sometimes sinful feasts we shared in restaurants and reception halls around the world. And his willingness to try just about anything put before him on a plate made him a joy to be with at table…and the perfect ambassador for a little organization with global aspirations.

Unfortunately, at that time, part of the criticism of ISWA was also deserved.

ISWA had been founded in the mid-60s by a small coterie of senior writers and editors from around the world who found themselves convening regularly to cover the US space program and other science and technology stories of international interest.

Originally intended as a network of mutual support and local contacts for writers who might be lost and linguistically challenged in strange lands, ISWA was made up largely of white Anglo-Saxon males—Americans, Canadians, and Brits, many of them ex-pats, the notable of whom was Arthur C. Clarke.

In the 1980s, however, Howard, who by then was ISWA secretary-treasurer, and myself, as newly elected president, decided we needed to change—literally—the complexion of the organization, if it was to match the realities of a changing world.

By reaching out to a new generation of young and native science journalists, both male and female, in the less developed world, Howard and I saw ISWA grow to more than 400 members in some 40 nations. Many of them were the first—and only—home-grown science journalists in their countries.

More important, ISWA's self-defined mission changed to that of a facilitator for training and education programs, a promoter of improving the quality of science journalism, and the publisher of a newsletter providing information about fellowships, scholarships, and other professional development opportunities.

Despite these successes, by the late 1990s, we began to wonder if the Internet and other forms of global communication had made ISWA irrelevant—and if we should disband the group.

As we were discussing this possibility at a meeting in Berlin, a tall, distinguished, Nigerian journalist, who we knew for his anti-government articles, stood up, and showing us his battered ISWA membership card, said: "This little card allowed me to leave the Lagos airport last week—and probably kept me out of jail."

Howard turned to me and, in his typically wry and dead-pan way, quipped: "I guess this means we have to keep on going."

And, ISWA did keep on going.

In Montreal, this past fall, ISWA became part of the World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ), an umbrella group of national associations, in which its role will be to represent the interests of individual journalists from countries that have not yet established national associations.

Even as his health deteriorated, Howard remained cogent, funny, and concerned about the then still uncertain future of that federation. We discussed by phone many times before I left for Canada what ISWA's role might be. Immediately after the conference and just before he died, I was able to call and report that the new federation promised to embody many of ISWA's principles and goals.

Although by this time his voice had been reduced to a raspy whisper, I could sense he was pleased and

Jim Cornell is president of the International Science Writers Association.

proud that our efforts had succeeded—and would continue into the future.

No matter where ISWA takes me next, I'll always think of Howard when I sit down for the ceremonial meal—especially if I can't determine exactly what's being served. ■

MICHELLE TRUDEAU WINS 2004 VICTOR COHN PRIZE

Michelle Trudeau, a correspondent for National Public Radio who has covered mental health, human behavior and brain science for more than two decades, has been awarded the 2004 Victor Cohn Prize for Excellence in Medical Science Reporting. The prize, for a body of work published or broadcast within the last five years, was created by the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing (CASW).

The $3,000 award was be presented to Trudeau on Nov. 8, 2004 in Fayetteville, Ark., at an awards dinner held during the council's 42nd annual New Horizons in Science news briefing for reporters.

Trudeau was recognized for stories reflecting a deep understanding of mental health and the related science and policy issues, and for her compelling storytelling. Her reports not only relayed what she learned in her reporting, but brought listeners into close contact with children and families struggling with mental illness.

Before she began her radio career in 1981, Trudeau, a graduate of Stanford University, studied primate behavior with Jane Goodall at the Gombe Stream Research Center in Tanzania, and worked as a research associate at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C. She has been a reporter and producer for NPR's science desk since 1982.

PHOTO BY BUDDY MCGURGAN

Michelle Trudeau accepts the 2004 Victor Cohn Prize from CASW President Jerry Bishop.

This is the fifth presentation of the Cohn Prize for Excellence in Medical Science Reporting. This year's entries were judged by Paul Raeburn, a New York City-based journalist and writer; Cristine Russell, a former Washington Post science writer, now freelancing from Connecticut; and Robert Lee Hotz, a science writer for the *Los Angeles Times*. Raeburn and Russell are also on the CASW board. ■

PHOTO BY BUDDY MCGURGAN

-30- **Ben Patrusky was honored for 30 years of inspiring leadership and dedication as he steps down as program organizer and director of the council's annual New Horizons in Science Briefings. At the microphone, he's shown taking a bow at the November 2004 New Horizons meeting in Fayetteville, Ark. where the CASW board presented him with a travel certificate for a long-overdue and well-deserved vacation. Joining Ben are (far left) his wife Judy and (not all are visible) Paul Raeburn, David Perlman, Jerry Bishop, Diane McGurgan, Cristine Russell, Joann Rodgers, Arthur Fisher, Polly Matzinger, Lewis Cope, and Tom Siegfried. Taking over the New Horizons meetings is Paul Raeburn. Ben Patrusky continues as CASW executive director.**

PRESIDENT'S LETTERS

by Deborah Blum


PHOTO BY KRISTEN JALOVAR, EXPRESS PORTRAITS

This is my last message as NASW president, and I want to use the space to catch the membership up on our progress concerning the future of our national meeting.

I'll start by sharing the results of our most recent online survey. As you recall, there were two surveys on the future of the NASW meeting. In the first, completed in January 2004, a majority of respondents indicated a willingness—and often a wish—for a different meeting, one less dependent on a scientific organization.

However, at the 2004 membership meeting in Seattle, it became clear that a number of people had not realized, when answering the survey, that the NASW board was actually considering making such a change. A second survey was conducted in August 2004 to which 440 members responded. That survey, set up with the invaluable help of cybrarian Craig Hicks, provided important information and advice to the board. Survey questions and answers are found at the end of this column.

As you will see, the response is generally open-minded toward the idea of change as long as certain specifics are given due attention. Specifically, members want a meeting that combines newsworthy, story-generating information and professional training. Priorities and themes that emerged from the most recent survey:

- Location matters
- Make the meeting compact (three days total)
- Offer a wide range of topics and top-rate scientists, intelligently combined with training sessions
- Networking and professional training are more important than story opportunities

After careful consideration and member input, the board has decided on a new meeting structure in combination with the annual New Horizons in Science briefing offered by the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing (CASW). It's a comprehensive move that integrates our workshops with the New Horizon program and also includes the NASW general business meeting, Science-in-Society Awards ceremony, and NASW board meeting. This new national meeting format will take place in October 2005 at Carnegie Mellon University, in Pittsburgh.

For those who think this is a revolutionary a decision, here's a short history lesson. The NASW workshops began in 1994 as a lunch-hour panel organized by a handful of volunteers (and spearheaded by then NASW president Laurie Garrett). The NASW awards were presented at AAAS beginning in February 1999 (thanks to former president Joe Palca). Before that, the NASW award was traditionally presented at the CASW meeting in the fall.

Forward momentum has brought us to this a point as an organization. NASW consists of 2,400 science writers unified by the belief what we write should be done with independence and integrity. I believe those goals united us, all of us, across a very diverse membership.

Heretofore, we were the only journalism organization with a national meeting based within a meeting of its sources. We profess to be independent journalists but our association with AAAS allowed a scientific organization to dictate the timing and location of our national conference. Moving the NASW national meeting away from AAAS will allow us to stand as an organization of science writers in our right.

The NASW workshops will continue to focus on science coverage, professional development, and networking. We believe this will provide an excellent complement to CASW's New Horizons which offers in-depth briefings on seminal developments in science, medicine, and technology that are likely to make news in the coming years.

Will NASW continue to have a presence at the AAAS annual meeting? Yes. NASW will maintain its education focus at AAAS by continuing to offer its mentoring program, internship fair, and professional development programs—especially for new members—taking advantage of the framework of a large, national science meeting.

I believe this promises an exciting future for the National Association of Science Writers. It has been my pleasure as president to play a role in these changes and I look forward to seeing the new officers and board continue to improve our association. ■

Deborah Blum is a freelance writer and professor of journalism at the University of Wisconsin. She can be reached at dblum@wisc.edu.

NASW NATIONAL MEETING SURVEY RESULTS

1. Could you afford to come to both meetings?

40% No, one meeting is my limit

38% I can find a way to attend meetings that are a priority

12% Only if one could be covered by grants or fellowships

10% Yes, if I had assignments

2. What kind of meeting would you prefer to attend?

38% A meeting for science writers that combines both training and newsworthy coverage

37% A meeting that combines a professional meeting with sessions organized by a scientific society

25% A meeting dedicated to science writers

3. If NASW merges it's meeting with the CASW science program, are there aspects of the combined program that you think would need particular attention? *(select all that apply)*

30% Location

28% Length of meeting

27% Story opportunities

15% Other (please explain)

4. What do you look for in coverage or story opportunities?*(select all that apply)*

23% Panels that look ahead to future developments in science

21% A diversity of topics

20% Reports that announce new discoveries or events in science

16% National and internationally known science experts

15% Topics that address my particular field of specialization

5% Other (please explain)

Comments:

CASW already has good topics that I'd be interested in

CASW meetings are always interesting, and a good place to pick up ideas for future stuff. But they are too long; they also take place in secondary locations, which helps with hotel rates but is a killer on airfares and ease of air travel.

CASW is a small, personal meeting. AAAS is more like a zoo. It's nice to have two very different opportunities.

Wherever the location, please plan for schmooze time, networking, professional development for PIOs and journalists (paraphrase of multiple e-mails)

I am concerned that more PIOs and not enough journalists attend CASW

This is such a bad idea. Please keep pairing the main NASW meeting with AAAS.

I think it would be a mistake to separate entirely from the AAAS meeting.

Frankly, AAAS allows me to help publicize the work of speakers from my university, but CASW might better help me get in touch with national reporters. It's hard to choose.

5. What do you consider your primary specialization in science writing?

31% Health/medicine

22% I'm a generalist

18% Other
(biology, life sciences, neuroscience, genetics, chemistry, nutrition, evolution, immunology, microbiology, science policy, science humor, writing for kids all included in responses)

12% Physical sciences, astronomy

9% Environment

4% Technology

3% Behavioral sciences

1% Energy

6. What do you consider a reasonable meeting length?

58% Three Days

25% Two Days

15% Four Days

2% Five Days or More

7. If NASW has a second, smaller meeting at AAAS, what would you like to see highlighted? *(select all that apply)*

36% Freelance opportunities

21% Meeting coverage

21% Mentoring and young journalist training

8% Prefer the pre-1990s model of no NASW workshops at AAAS

14% Other (please explain)

Comments:

AAAS is a waste of my time (except for the NASW party), as a student the mentoring would have been nice

Get out of AAAS now!

I like the current format

*Shorten CASW content-wise; or run parallel tracks for physical and life sciences and tag workshops on to that. If you did that, I'd likely go to AAAS *and* NASW most years.*

I prefer the combined meeting. It is an excellent value. I have to underwrite four attendees so cost is important. Two meetings in one locale are preferable.

I prefer the current model.

If NASW is punting on the AAAS, I guess I don't see the point of having a second, smaller meeting, especially as there is so little news at the AAAS meeting.

If we were having two meetings, then maintaining some professional sessions would be good

Modified pre-1990 model—one or two professional development sessions during same time frame as AAAS and at same place but no conflict with news events.

Avoid duplication

The great beauty of combining with AAAS is that the meeting attracts the international science press. I fear we'd lose major science writers by combining with CASW. The workshops seem to be attended largely by PIOs and freelancers.

Professional networking and development (a major priority according to many, many e-mails).

8. What do you see as the primary benefit of a national science writers' meeting?

63% Networking

27% Professional training

10% Story assignments and ideas

9. What can you reasonably afford to attend a science journalism meeting?

43% $500 to $1,000

34% Less than $500

14% $1,000 to $1,500

9% Other

10. If you attend meetings on assignment either as a freelancer, staff journalist or PIO is there a set travel budget? Note: 413 people answered this last question, rather than 440 as with the previous questions.)

44% No, I am fully covered.

21% Not relevant; I pay my own way to meetings that are important.

19% I am paid per story so the budget is determined by productivity.

16% I receive a set stipend and must pay the rest out of pocket.

2004 EVERT CLARK/ SETH PAYNE AWARD ANNOUNCED

The winner of the 2004 Evert Clark/Seth Payne Award, an annual prize for young science journalists, is Kara Platoni. She received the award and its $1,000 prize for three stories in the *East Bay Express*, "The Making of a Martyr," "I, Robot," and "It's a Boy! We Make Sure of It."

The panel of judges cited Platoni for "beautiful writing on a variety of difficult topics," for "integrating science with compelling narratives," and for "bringing characters to life." Her stories tackled such issues as RU-486 and exoskeletons.

The judges also awarded an honorable mention to Michelle Nijhuis for a story in *High Country News*, "They're Here: Global Warming's Unlikely Harbingers." Nijhuis was cited for her extensive reporting and ability to make beetles and climate forecasts interesting and scary, without sensationalizing the topic. ■

(Source: news release)

ROBERT LEE HOTZ WINS NATIONAL ACADEMIES COMMUNICATION AWARD

NASW Vice President Robert Lee Hotz, a science reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, is one of four recipients of the 2004 National Academies Communication Awards. The awards recognize excellence in reporting and communicating science, engineering, and medicine to the general public. A panel of nine judges considered 143 print, radio, and television entries.

Hotz took top honors in the newspaper/magazine/Internet category for his report on the space shuttle Columbia accident and, what the judges cited as, "his brilliant" narrative "Butterfly on a Bullet."

Hotz received a $20,000 cash award at a ceremony, in November, at the National Academies' Beckman Center in Irvine, Calif. Other awards were made in book and TV/radio categories.

The Communication Awards are one component of the National Academies Keck Futures Initiative. The Futures Initiative is funded by a 15-year, $40 million

grant from the W.M. Keck Foundation. The initiative sponsors conferences to bring together scientists from many disciplines to pose new questions and share ideas for new interdisciplinary research. The conferences also explore ways to improve communication among scientists, as well as between scientists and the public.

For information on the other 2004 award winners, the Futures Initiative, and the Communication Awards nomination process visit **www.national-academies.org/keck**. ■

(Source: NAS news release)

NCSWA ANNUAL WORKSHOP SHIFTING GEARS

For the third time in the last four years, the Northern California Science Writers Association (NCSWA) organized a one-day workshop for science writers and students in the San Francisco Bay Area. This year, the theme was how to push the envelope: branching into new career directions, making innovative use of research tools, and pursuing projects and topics that might seem daunting. Keynote speakers, K.C. Cole, *Los Angeles Times*, and David Perlman, *San Francisco Chronicle*, energized the audience of nearly 100 writers with tales from their own stellar careers.

Workshop topics ranged from Back to Basics, Writing Books, Tools to Dig Deeper, Innovative Journalism, to Midcareer Fellowships. In response to feedback from past workshop attendees, the NCSWA board of directors decided to broaden the audience for this workshop beyond those who attended on Oct. 16, 2004. To do this they asked the ten students in this year's class of the Science Communication program at UC Santa Cruz to report on the workshop, as an independent assignment outside of their regular coursework.

The results are posted on **www.ncswa.org/archive/workshops/2004/1intro.html**. There is an overview article, a recap of each of the keynote talks, and five articles on the various panel discussions. Bylines for these eight articles appear with the stories. Two other class members served as editors and overall coordinators of the project.

The NCSWA board of directors would like to thank all of the panelists, who donated their time on a Saturday to speak about their careers and their favorite writing tools and approaches. Major credit also goes to NCSWA board members who took on the time-consuming task of organizing each panel: Dawn Levy, Mary Miller, Charlie Petit, Sarah Yang, and Lynn Yarris. ■

(Source: NCSWA Web site and Robert Irion, workshop organizer)

PHOTO BY ROY CORDELL

University of Arkansas graduate student John Shadwick (right) talks about places to find slime molds while Corinna Wu of AAAS Science Update (center) and Jennifer Cutraro of Purdue University listen. About 75 science writers took part in the collecting field trip.

SCIENCE WRITERS CONTRIBUTE TO SLIME MOLD SCIENCE

At the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing's New Horizons program in November, science writers followed University of Arkansas researchers Steve Stephenson and Fred Spiegel into the Ozark National Forest to collect samples of slime molds as part of a national biological diversity initiative funded by NSF. The writers collected samples from soil, leaf litter and old logs, and the researchers took them back to the lab for examination. Thirty-six different slime mold species were collected during the afternoon trek.

"The number of species of protostelids was quite high…more than half of all of the species known to science," Stephenson said. "This provides evidence of how truly cosmopolitan these critters really are.

The number of species of myxomycetes collected was low, but it was late in the season for this group, the only slime molds that can be observed directly in the field. Additional survey work should reveal many more species—one would expect 50 species or more from a typical oak forest, according to Stephenson.

Researchers don't know much about the occurrence of dictyostelids in the Ozarks. The limited data from this one sampling effort suggests that the species found in Ozark forests resemble those found in Appalachian forests.

"*Dictyostelium discoideum* was a nice find," said Stephenson. "This species was described from the Appalachians and is more common there than any place in the world sampled thus far.

"All in all, it was a nice set of species for a brief visit to an Ozark forest," Stephenson said. ■

(Contributed by Melissa Blouin, University of Arkansas)

CYBERBEAT

by Craig Hicks


PHOTO BY ANNE L. WENZEL

Undaunted by the slings and arrows of server snafus, errant error messages, and heaping helpings of spam, NASW's virtual community of science writers continues to thrive. With last summer's addition of nasw-foia, a list dedicated to freedom of information issues, we now host seven e-mail discussion groups pitched to a variety of professional interests and issues—plus one that's just for shooting the breeze. Visit **http://lists.nasw.org** to join the conversation.

And now, some recent highlights from our online discussions:

nasw-pr

Idaho-based freelancer **Mary Beckman** kicked off an informative exchange about services providing media contact information (Aug. 30, 2004): "I'm helping out an intern at my old place of employment and am trying to find out what's so great about Vocus," she wrote. "Is it possible to find a million places to send press releases—ahem, news releases—on Vocus like it is on Bacon's? I guess my question is—are Vocus and Bacon's the same kind of searchable media database that includes newspapers, trade journals, popular magazines, etc.? If so, any preferences?"

Jennifer Donovan and colleagues at Howard Hughes Medical Institute have been using Vocus for nearly two years. "It is a searchable media database (in fact, Bacon's is the media database it's based on), but it's much more than that," she noted. "[I]f a media database is all you want, Vocus is a pretty expensive way to get it. … It's a powerful tool, but it doesn't come cheap."

Others echoed this sentiment. "Well, here's one difference'" offered University of Oregon's **Melody Ward Leslie**. "Bacon's searchable database is $2,370 per year [at the] nonprofit rate. Vocus has a searchable database that includes Bacon's—and a whole lot more—and also does lots of PR management functions but costs $7,500 per year."

"We tried out Bacon's electronic earlier this spring," wrote Penn State's **A'drea Elyse Messer**. "For us, frankly, already having a database mailing list that I put together 15 years ago (and keep updated) it wasn't any advantage. We do use the paper Bacon's books, but for the price difference there was no benefit to the online, as we would still have to go through larger lists and handpick [more targeted] lists."

nasw-freelance

What's the best way to get in sync with the idiosyncrasies of a new editor? Medical writer **David Surface** lobbed this query to the brain trust of nasw-freelance (Aug. 27, 2004) and was rewarded with a plethora of practical opinion.

"I've written for a certain medical trade magazine for three years," he explained. "It's very low-paying, but they've always been a pleasure to work with, especially because of the long-time editor who gave me steady assignments that were always very well thought-out and specific in their parameters and (generally) not too time-consuming to execute."

Things changed when a new editor replaced the old. "He's nice enough, but the assignments he gives me are so broad and fuzzy, it's been driving me crazy," wrote Surface. "Instead of giving me a specific story idea, he basically sends me off to find a story idea in a broad, broad topic range.

"Three times now, I've contacted potential sources who've been alternately befuddled and downright put off because they don't know what I want (frankly, because I'm not sure myself). Consequently, I'm spending more time than ever on these articles. … So how do I tell this guy that he doesn't pay me enough for this without saying 'You don't pay me enough for this?'"

"I have no idea and I wouldn't try," replied West Virginia writer **John Gever**. "It sounds very much like you don't want, and can't afford, to do this gig under the current circumstances. You would have every right to say—without sounding angry, mind you, just firm—the current pay rate does not justify the time commitment that this new editor is requiring. You could add that you'd be happy to continue working for him but you would need X% more per story in order to make it worthwhile."

Maryland science writer **Jim Kling** agreed with Gever. "It's best to be straightforward, and editors generally will understand. It may even prompt this editor to improve his or her performance."

"I'd also find a way to tell him it didn't used to be this way," counseled freelance writer and editor **Richard Robinson** of Massachusetts. "Explain that his predecessor was very clear from the outset exactly how the story should be shaped, and that this allowed you to earn a reasonable wage for the mag. If he can do the same, you'd love to keep working for him, but otherwise. …"

"I agree with the others—just say it," urged Ohio freelance **Faith Reidenbach**. "But the odds are that the new editor won't [or] can't pay enough. In that case, remember that nature abhors a vacuum. If you create space for new and better projects by letting go of this

Freelance writer and editor Craig Hicks manages NASW's Web site and e-mail discussion groups. He welcomes your comments about the association's Internet services at cybrarian@nasw.org.

magazine, you'll get them. Trusting that principle has been key to the growth of my business."

"I think it might be time to shop around for a revenue source to replace this particular magazine," suggested **Angie Roberts** of Bungalow Productions. "It sounds like the hassle isn't worth it."

She told Surface that she's had a similar experience with another low-paying magazine: "[a]lthough the new editor doesn't change the direction of my articles—they're hardly edited at all—he doesn't print them in a timely fashion, one never appeared (although I was paid for it), and one of my articles ran with someone else's byline."

"I was able to negotiate a higher per-story rate with the guy," she wrote, "but over the last two years have sought out some other revenue streams so I only have to put up with him on a minimal basis. I no longer count on a monthly check from the magazine, as I did in the past. Although I hated to see the money go, I've more than made up for it now and I am less stressed."

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

THE FREE LANCE

by Tabitha M. Powledge

Writing for scientists, especially on the Web

[This is Part Two of a much-expanded version of an article scheduled to appear in the second edition of NASW's *A Field Guide for Science Writers*, edited by Deborah Blum, Mary Knudson, and Robin Marantz Henig, which Oxford University Press is publishing in fall 2005.]

The last episode was about the market for Web-based writing for scientific audiences and also explored what to write about. Here writers and editors discuss how to write for this audience and what the future might hold for this market.

When they are writing for scientists, says Bea Perks, *BioMedNet*'s former news editor, inexperienced reporters who don't quite understand the research they're reporting are prone to hide behind hugely complex text lifted from papers or verbatim quotes from an interview. "Don't ever write anything unless you could happily explain it to your grandma (unless your grandma's a Nobel prize-winning nuclear physicist, immunologist, etc., etc.)."

Freelance Beryl Benderly thinks writing for scientists is in some respects easier than writing for the general public. "Technical publications place many fewer demands than general audience publications on one's writerly skills. Because the readers have a real, usually economic, need for the information in the article, there is no need for intriguing or stylish prose to entice them to read it. The point is to get the facts right and explain them clearly."

Dan Ferber, also a freelance, says, "For general audiences, I can't assume an intrinsic interest in the subject. I often focus more on the people in the story and use them to lead the reader to the science. For technical audiences, I delve deeper into how the findings are being received by others in the scientific community. Rather than just a quick reaction quote, I might explore hurdles researchers face and how they might overcome them."

Ivan Oransky, who edits online daily news for *The Scientist*, urges writers to remember to practice solid journalism, even if there are pressures to be boosterish about your audience at a trade publication. "Don't be afraid to anger some of your readers—others of your readers may be cheering," he says.

"Compared with writing for print, online writing is shorter, with shorter paragraphs and shorter pieces because of the difficulty readers (including this one) have in trying to absorb large quantities of text from a screen," Benderley says. "This enforced brevity makes it harder, and sometimes impossible, to present detailed, lengthy, linear arguments."

She may be correct about lengthy arguments, but for me one delightful difference between online and print publications, which I think few realize, is that online publications—ones for scientists, anyway—often are more flexible about space.

Sometimes considerably more flexible, hundreds of words more flexible.

I know, this is not what you've heard. And it's not true at most online consumer publications, where graphics rule, the editors assume that viewers read at third-grade level, and words can be the least important part of the story. But if many scientists can't write, at least most of them can read, and they want detail. They are thoroughly accustomed to plowing through the gnarly prose of their peers. Your prose will by contrast be a pleasure.

If you're writing for a print journal that is also online, you will usually be constrained by the rules for print—having to fit into a particular, rigidly defined space and get rid of widows and orphans. But space on the Web is functionally infinite, and online editors are usually overworked, with no time to pick nits, let alone rewrite you. If your online piece is a hundred words over, and those words are not just undisciplined gabble and fluff, chances are good they will survive.

If you're a freelance, don't expect to be paid more for your logorrhea, unfortunately. The check will hardly ever be for more than the contracted amount. But you may have to spend less time cutting and pasting and paring and agonizing over which of several crucial points,

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

or intricate explanations, or dandy quotes, you'll have to leave out. Writing really short is really hard and really time-consuming. When the subject is science, sometimes more is more.

Final advice

"One of the areas of growing opportunities is in news writing for scientists," Oransky says. For science writers, current and would-be, Oransky urges careful attention to the differences between news writing and typical magazine writing. "Such differences are just as important as knowing whether your audience has PhDs or high school diplomas. It's not rocket science; any good writer can do it. But I can't tell you how many successful magazine writers have had miserable experiences writing news for me because they simply didn't pay attention to the style. We attribute things more carefully and tend to write leads that include news, rather than interesting anecdotes or background. There are exceptions, of course, but that's the general rule. If you want to write news, you should be able to cover a fire in a lab as well as you can cover the latest study published by that lab. Get that kind of experience, if you don't have it."

Lois Wingerson, former US editor-in-chief at *BioMedNet*, reminds us that there is life—lucrative science-writing life—beyond journalism (and not necessarily online.) "There will remain a strong market for ghost-writing in this field, especially for medical journalism," she forecasts. Scientists (and doctors) often can't write and don't want to learn. Beyond the journal articles they must produce, there are many places scientists need their words to appear: grant applications, review journals (as opposed to those that publish results of primary research), pharma-company informational brochures, interdepartmental newsletters, and others. "So there ought to be ways for savvy writers who are not obsessed with bylines to market themselves either as 'transcribers' or as coaches. If I were going in this direction I might approach universities and research centers directly."

"I think the newspaper analogy is a good one to keep in mind for the online world. That's how most online-only publications see themselves, and I think the readers have that instant/disposable impression of the content too," says Christine Soares, formerly online news editor of *The Scientist*. If you're trying to break in to science writing, online is a good place to start, she argues. "There's a constant need for 'content' and, frankly, the standards are lower than magazines because of the fast-turnaround (at least in news). Of course one shouldn't develop bad writing and reporting habits, but online is an easier place to stick a toe in the water, learn some good habits if one has a good editor, and generate the first few clips. And for experienced writers, it's also a good place to turn unused threads from a larger project into a few quick stories that generate extra income."

The Web and the future

What's the future of online science writing? Will online science publications eventually overtake print? Several of the writers I consulted say yes, definitely. "More and more organizations are going to totally online publishing and it makes real economic sense for them to do so," Benderley says. "Only the ad-based 'throw-away' medical publications will continue to publish mainly on paper because it's a lot easier to entice readers to browse through a paper publication that arrives unbidden in the mail than to visit an unknown Web site."

"Scientists are slowly getting used to reading journals online," Perks says. Freelance Rabiya Tuma disagrees. "Scientists are attached to their paper, in part because they are always on the move and it's easier and faster to grab the last three issues of a journal off their desks as they head for the airport than it is to think ahead and download what they need. Will there be those people who love having everything online and access it that way? Yes, but I don't think one will replace the other."

Wingerson is dubious too. "People will use the Web for research but it will be a very long time before electronics beats paper for portability, readability, and convenience. There will continue to be a need for take-home brochures, magazines, and booklets. Exhibitors at conferences will want something to give away. Scientists will use electronics at work, print elsewhere. They will go to online journals for articles written by each other, but I can't believe the market science writers serve will go completely online in the near future."

Economics remains a formidable barrier to online-only publications. "Online editions of print publications may expand, but advertisers are still reluctant to support online-only publications," Oransky says. Specialized markets may continue to crop up, such as society Web sites, but they won't pay very well, if at all. "There just aren't that many eyeballs to interest potential advertisers, even if those advertisers know they're reaching a specialized audience," he says. Perks echoes that thought. "Somebody somewhere needs to find a way of making money out of writing for scientists, in a sustainable way. There might be more expansion in the short term but a downturn in the longer term wouldn't be altogether surprising."

"In some cases, I expect that online sites will turn more to the scientists themselves to write abstracts or whatnot for the coverage. Others will stick with journalists and a news approach," Tuma predicts. "But I do think the failure of BioMedNet, and the Beagle before it, hint that like other online media, e.g., Salon, science sites are going to have to find a mechanism for generating revenue."

Real simple

News alerts from sources like Google and Yahoo! help you keep up with the topics of your choice. RSS is

a different twist on that near-impossible task. The literal meaning of the acronym RSS is in dispute, although a consensus seems to be developing around Real (or Really) Simple Syndication. Have you noticed those little orange XML flags on an increasing number of Web sites? They mean you can view constantly updated content from those sites via RSS.

To use RSS, you need an RSS news reader or aggregator that allows you to collect and display RSS feeds. With an RSS news reader, you can view headlines from the service(s) you select and retrieve updates automagically, thus staying current with new content soon after it is published. The updates are delivered to the reader as headlines that link to the full text on the originating site. There are several RSS reader programs that live on your computer. Some are free (Feedreader), some not (FeedDemon, NewzCrawler).

Here's Yahoo's list: **http://dir.yahoo.com/Computers_and_Internet/Data_Formats/XML__eXtensible_Markup_Language_/RSS/News_Aggregators/**.

Google's much longer list: **http://directory.google.com/Top/Reference/Libraries/Library_and_Information_Science/Technical_Services/Cataloguing/Metadata/RDF/Applications/RSS/News_Readers/**.

You can read their descriptions on these lists and Google reviews of those with features that interest you. I have no experience with any of them. For some months I've been collecting my RSS feeds on my My Yahoo! page, which is free and has added an experimental RSS reader to its services. I visit the page almost every day anyway to check the customized wire service and other news headlines Yahoo! collects for me. Looking at my RSS headlines while I'm there is more convenient than stashing them in a program on my own machine, and also kinder to my sluggish dial-up connection. Yahoo will let you add up to 50 different RSS sources. You can select yours from a long and ever-growing list Yahoo! provides, and/or you can add the URL of any site that syndicates its content. Some syndicating sites are mum about this feature for some reason, but most let you know by carrying those bitty orange XML flags.

RSS is much more wide-ranging and heterogeneous —perhaps the better word is promiscuous—than the various news alert services. So it has the defects of its virtues. It collects headlines from any sites you specify that syndicate their content. These include traditional news sites, but also many others, from blogs to National Institutes of Health press releases. Thus you get more useless headlines, ranging from the simply irrelevant all the way to eye-popping drivel. But you also increase your chances of unearthing an obscure occasional gem that the rest of us aren't writing about. RSS scans whole sites, but the Yahoo reader doesn't organize material by keywords. You are your own filter, and that takes time. Some paid readers claim to sort on keywords, and I guess that might be a reason to consider buying.

But RSS does husband your time by presenting material potentially of interest in one convenient place, saving you separate trips to sites you now visit regularly and bringing you intriguing material from sites new to you. Instead of going to the *New York Times* site and scanning the headlines in its various sections, you can ask the reader to collect headlines from the sections you want. Yes, you can get the *New York Times* to e-mail many of these headlines directly to you, but not all of its sections are available for e-mailing. You can also sign up for e-mailed alerts for *New York Times* stories on topics of your choice. But that will cost you about $20 a year. RSS is free. Note also, however, that with fast-changing sites like a daily newspaper, those RSS headlines sometimes last only a few hours.

For the self-employed—that's us—RSS offers an especially intriguing feature. If you have a Web site, you can syndicate your own content by adding RSS to your site. Potentially that means wider circulation of your work and another way to advertise your services.

Find how-tos at:

- **http://my.yahoo.com/s/publishers.html**
- **http://channels.lockergnome.com/rss/**
- **http://www.webreference.com/authoring/languages/xml/rss/intro/** ■

PIO FORUM

by Dennis Meredith

Picture Perfect Science

PHOTO BY JIM WALLACE, DUKE U. PHOTOGRAPHY

Pity poor photographers. During the print-only era, their research images might warrant a spacious photo spread or handsome full-page bleeds in our institutional magazines and newspapers. But the Web era has all too often relegated photos to dinky images engulfed in a sea of online text.

Fortunately, the Web gives photographers a chance to really show off their talent, in the form of photo galleries. But too few PIOs take advantage of this chance to tell our research stories visually and engagingly. Also, we lose a chance to give our photogs a really nice online venue for their images. Of course, this kindly gesture is entirely selfish, since it could inspire photographers to expend more energy and effort, resulting in better shots

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

for our news releases and features.

So, here are some ideas for developing online photo galleries. They're gleaned from my own experience and from the sage advice of our radio/TV director Cabell Smith and Web designer Tam Ferguson, who specializes in such galleries. As usual, I've included a list of URLs that allow you to see the galleries cited (see box at right).

A "gallery" can be merely a page of thumbnail images that allows the user to click to see larger images and captions. NASA does a nice job of this simple format on its Web site. However, I prefer a gallery that is a more self-contained experience, occupying its own window and with some sense of theme and continuity. An example is the "Postcards from Costa Rica" gallery developed using images by our photographer Chris Hildreth. This site was given more immediacy by being a daily posting of new images as Chris took them in Costa Rica, at the Organization for Tropical Studies' La Selva Biological Station (OTS), and transmitted to Duke. There, Web manager Ben Riseling laid them into a progressively larger collection. (Of course, I *had* to come along to write the captions!) Besides providing a nice gallery, the images served to advertise the upcoming article on the OTS in *Duke Magazine*, which also used some of the gallery images.

While the basic postcards gallery showed off the images adequately, as you can see from Duke Photography's "Face Value" collection, even a simple HTML gallery can be quite striking.

Galleries can also provide an excellent visual portal to important information on a Web site. For example, the Duke Primate Center uses a gallery interface on its site to introduce users to the lemur species in its care.

An audio narration can give a gallery a more engaging, personal feel. The *New York Times* does an excellent job with such galleries, narrated by its reporters. Its multimedia page also showcases video and audio multimedia features.

Doing a gallery can entail no more than creating an HTML page yourself. However, if possible, you should have a professional create a well-designed site, perhaps using Flash. With software such as iView MediaPro, you may be able to do the job yourself. But in the hands of a professional, using software such as Macromedia's Flash, your gallery will produce a much more dramatic impact on users. For example, such sophisticated software allows adding "movement" to still images through choreographed scans and zooms to emphasize key sections of an image. It also allows different transitions between images, elaborate presentation of text, and buttons and sliders to enable viewers to control the presentation.

Obviously, to get started you need good pictures with the same strong composition and interesting subjects as photos used in print publications. Avoid, for example, a gallery that's nothing more than a series of people posing stiffly with machines. Rather, the images should include interesting and varied angles and lively subjects.

Your images also need to have a unifying theme or story. They can either comprise a set of related images that combine to give viewers information about a piece of research. Or, they can be a sequence that carries the viewer through a process or idea. For complex or abstract concepts, you can even intersperse the photos with diagrams that explain the research.

The images should generally be horizontal, given the dimensional ratio of computer screens. They can also be vertical, but avoid mixing the two. Crop the shots to be one way or another.

If you're starting from scratch, first convene a meeting that includes the photographer, designer, and

Resources

- NASA Photo Gallery
www.nasa.gov/multimedia/imagegallery/index.html

- Duke galleries **www.duke.edu/galleries.html**
(Click on link to "Postcards from Costa Rica")

- Related *Duke Magazine* article "Where the Exotic Meets the Academic" **www.dukemagazine.duke.edu/dukemag/issues/070803/exotic1.html**

- Duke University Photography "Face Value"
photo1.dukenews.duke.edu/face_value/index.htm

- Duke University Primate Center
gallery of lemurs with background information
www.duke.edu/web/primate/FlashFiles/dukeNew19.html (click on "Learn" to see gallery)

- A collection of campus tours, many of which use galleries **www.campustours.com**
(For example, there's the University of Central Florida Virtual Tour: **www.ucf.edu/vtour/**)

- *New York Times* multimedia, including audio slide shows
www.nytimes.com/pages/multimedia/index.html

- Flash-animated gallery from Vanderbilt's *Exploration* magazine **www.exploration.vanderbilt.edu/news/news_nebula.htm**

- Theban Mapping Project, an example of still images used in a sophisticated learning site
www.thebanmappingproject.com/

scientist to discuss the vision of the gallery and work out the images to be shot. If you're working with a less-experienced research photographer, art-direct the shoot, collaborating with the photographer to create shots that are both visual and explanatory.

Your gallery should include no more than a dozen or so images, and narration shouldn't go over five minutes total. This means no more than about 30 seconds of narration per image. Also, for narrated slide shows, you'll want to keep the captions simpler. Simpler captions allow viewers to engage themselves in the images and sound, and without trying to view images, read and listen at the same time.

…the Web era has all too often relegated photos to dinky images engulfed in a sea of online text.

I find "amateurs" such as scientists more engaging as narrators than professional announcers. Even though a pro would clearly give more polish to the gallery, to have a researcher talking about his/her own work is more involving. An exception, of course, is a narrator with a thick accent or a distinctively unpleasant voice.

Using coaching, good preparation, and editing it's possible to elicit a good narration from even an amateur. For example, rather than preparing a script, work with your narrator to develop a bulleted list of points to make for each image. An amateur reading a script will invariably sound stiff and awkward. Also, let your narrator know that he/she doesn't have to be perfect in recording the narration. He/she can always repeat and rephrase during the recording session. Let the narrator rehearse a few times to get the verbal marbles out of his/her mouth.

Thankfully, a professional sound engineer has absolutely magical editing tools to tweak a narration. Using software such as Adobe Audition or Pro Tools a sound editor can take out pauses, stammers, and uhs. An engineer can also adjust bass and treble to make even a squeaky voice sound good. Finally, an engineer can incorporate music or environmental sounds to enrich the impact of the presentation.

While the best venue for recording a narration is a sound studio, perfectly acceptable narrations can be recorded in a quiet room using a digital minidisk or digital audio tape recorder.

As indicated earlier, the list below offers links to the galleries mentioned. It also includes links to a range of other galleries, including one very elaborate site that incorporates images into a broader educational experience.

So, have fun with galleries and make your photogs happy and your viewers enthralled! ■

NEWS FROM AFAR

by Jim Cornell

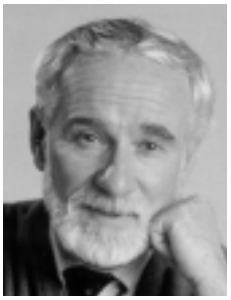


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Think of it as a Swedish "Field of Dreams."

A small group of visionaries —academics, policy wonks, and science communicators, including two NASW foreign members, Carl Sundberg and Ingrid Wuenning —believed that, if they built an AAAS-like meeting, the European scientific community would come.

Remarkably enough, they were right.

More than 1,800 participants from 68 countries showed up for the first truly pan-European, multi-disciplinary science conference, EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF2004), in Stockholm, Sweden, Aug. 24-28, 2004 thus confounding critics, convincing doubters, and suggesting that the AAAS might someday have an overseas rival.

This initial European outing was virtually a miniclone of its American model—the same unpredictable, frustrating, fascinating eclectic mix of hard science and soft features, new results and redundant overviews, exciting moments of contention and conflict offset by hours of sleep-inducing policy discussions.

It also had its share of AAAS-like quirks: the baffling convention center floor plan, the mismatches between room sizes and audiences, the empty early-AM sessions, the program cancellations, the missing papers.

ESOF also inspired the same sort of serendipitous social encounters fuelled by coffee and cocktails. Moreover, the official ESOF receptions were lavish and their settings spectacular, including one for media at the Nobel Museum in the former stock exchange building in Old Town; a press luncheon held in the converted-medieval-stable offices of *Forskning and Framsteg*, the Swedish popular science magazine edited by NASW foreign member Bjorn Fjaestad, which featured smoked-reindeer rollups; and a smorgasbord buffet in Stockholm's City Hall, a cavernous Valhalla-like palace where the Nobel dinners are held and which could easily accommodate a host of Vikings—either those of yore or of Minnesota today!

And, not to be outdone by its European offspring, the AAAS invited European members and press to sip champagne beneath the superstructure of a 17th-century warship, the *Vasa*, dredged from Stockholm harbor and now the centerpiece of the country's most visited museum.

In short, ESOF was an instant success, arriving on

Jim Cornell is president of the International Science Writers Association. Send items of interest—international programs, conferences, events, etc.—to cornelljc@earthlink.net.

Science news continental style

Are science story interests different in the USA, compared to other areas of the world?

This question was asked in Stockholm at an ESOF2004 session entitled "From the *LA Times* to the *Financial Times*: Communicating Science Around the World" and organized by Ginger Pinholster, director of the AAAA's Office of Public Programs.

"Every reporter has unique story interests, no matter where she or he may be working," Pinholster said in answer to her own question. "But, based on *Science* and AAAS Annual Meeting coverage, European reporters generally seem to devote more time to science stories related to health and environmental threats, whereas US reporters may be more inclined to cover emerging technologies and scientific discoveries with a 'wow' factor.

"For example, US reporters at the 2003 AAAS Annual Meeting didn't cover a story on burning coal fires," she noted. "Yet, the story was among the top 10 most popular subjects for European reporters."

An analysis of coverage of the 2004 AAAS Annual Meeting showed that US and European reporters demonstrated slightly (but distinctly) different story preferences, as follows:

Top 10 USA Stories:

1. Stem cell research
2. Solar system
3. Pregnancy & alcohol
4. Dog genomics
5. Love & marriage
6. Athletes & doping
7. Human pathogens
8. Cloned mules
9. Languages world-wide
10. Cosmology

Top 10 International (mostly European) Stories

1. Stem cell research
2. Women & hormones
3. Dog genomics
4. Love & marriage
5. Athletes & doping
6. Human pathogens
7. Sir David King/climate
8. Solar system
9. Alzheimer's
10. Pregnancy & alcohol

Interestingly, even with their differences, American and European journalists seem to share fairly similar news values. "A US science journalist and a French science journalist are often more alike than a French science journalist and his editor," Fabrice Node-Langlois, a reporter for *Le Figaro* (Paris) told Pinholster. "In other words, we journalists covering science often have to moderate the exaggerated enthusiasm of our editor for sensationalistic stories with no scientific evidence, or conversely, we have to fight to convince him (or her) that, indeed, this story about antimatter or Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease is big news."

the scene full-born, feeling for all the world as if it had been held for years, rather than some raw and risky upstart. Its comfortable, intercontinental atmosphere was certainly aided (for Americans, at any rate) by the fact that English was the conference language…and that almost everyone in the host city seemed to speak perfect, idiomatic English, too.

Still, there were some noticeable differences between ESOF2004 and the typical AAAS gathering. While many sessions were of global interest—most notable, the announced discovery of a small, rocky exoplanet; the description of new silicon carbide chip-making process; and, the demonstration of telepathic computer control—many more had a distinctly European slant, such as the problems of an aging population base and the peculiar continental restrictions and restraints on scientific innovation and entrepreneurship.

Another major difference was the unusual number of sessions devoted to "science communication," with topics ranging from the impact of media on scientific decision making to what kind of science stories make headlines. (The organizer of the latter session was Ginger Pinholster of the AAAS, who presented some interesting statistics on the differing story interests of European and American reporters. See sidebar.) In part, this concentration on communication reflects the more serious interest in the subject among European academics; but, it also reflected the organizers' recognition that, if science is to succeed in a polyglot, multi-ethnic, politically fractious "New Europe," it needs a broad public base.

The ESOF outreach effort spilled from the lecture halls into the streets, literally, with an exuberant and diverse "Science in the City" program, that took lectures and demonstrations to Stockholm's museums, schools, and cobbled squares; a wild and sometimes wacky "X-change Cafe" sponsored by the British Association and hosted by the BBC's Quentin Cooper who promoted free-wheeling (and funny) discussions on topics of current interest and controversy; and the unique Klara Soup Theater, a Stockholm group that presented plays and sketches on scientific topics, served up with rolls and coffee at breakfast and, yes, soup at lunch.

Most extraordinary perhaps was the press attendance: 350 reporters, or nearly 20 percent of the total participants, most drawn by the novelty of ESOF's historic firstness, and many veterans of AAAS press rooms. (There was even a small contingent from North America, including a half-dozen young writers whose attendance was supported by Bosch Foundation fellowships.)

And, like reporters attending the AAAS, the ESOF press cadre had the usual complaints about presenters who rambled on to no obvious purpose and no certain conclusion, rehashed old results, or who refused to provide texts or even summaries of their papers. (Ironically, one of those problems may have stemmed from the

familiar issue of "accreditation." The ESOF staff was so intent on keeping public affairs people out of the press room—and process—they forgot that it is usually the PIOs who make sure professors show up with handouts.)

Any kinks in program or press operations will certainly be ironed out by the next, biennial, ESOF, now scheduled for July 15-19, 2006 in Munich (**www.esof 2006.org**). The wide and generally favorable press coverage of this meeting meant that those dreamers who struggled to make Stockholm happen had a host of now-enthusiastic supporters—and sponsors—signed up for Munich even before they left town.

The Japanese Association of Science and Technology Journalists (JASTJ) celebrated its 10th anniversary, July 3, 2004, at the Japan Press Center in downtown Tokyo, with a highlight of the event the introduction of the association's new book about science journalism.

The organization now has some 150 members, having doubled its size in the past year. It holds monthly lecture meetings, usually in Tokyo where most science reporters are headquartered, and publishes a quarterly newsletter. Some 220 people attended the association's decadal celebration, including science journalists, communicators, editors, public relation officers, students, interested citizens, and scientists. Among the scientists were three Nobel Prize winners for chemistry: Hideki Shirakawa, Ryouji Nozoe, and Kouiti Tanaka.

Under the general title "The Future of Science, Technology, and Society," the two-part event began with informal discussions in a "scientifique cafe," complete with a saxophone performance by jazz musician and amateur scientist Akira Sakata, who is well-known for his research on water fleas. Part two of the event was a panel discussion by an astrophysicist, a science critic, a science policy official, and a newspaper editorial writer on "What is Science Journalism?" which also happens to be the title of JASTJ's new book.

According to NASW foreign member Kenji Makino, with the anniversary of their organization approaching, the group decided to publish something would be both timely—and useful—by introducing the general public to the state of science journalism in Japan and around the world.

An editorial committee, of which Makino was chair, devised a book dealing with some major questions concerning the discipline (Why do we need science journalism ? What training and background is needed by science journalists? What are the techniques of science reporting?) and some basic background for general readers (Case studies of interaction between science and media. A short history of science journalism in Japan).

The approximately 40 authors were drawn primarily from the membership of JASTJ, veteran journalists who are or had been working for newspapers, magazines, or broadcast media. Other authors included scientists and three foreign journalists—Wolfgang Goede of *PM Magazine*, Alun Anderson of *The New Scientist*, and this columnist—who wrote about the state of science journalism in Germany, the UK, and USA respectively. [For now, at least, the book is available only in Japanese, thus sparing me embarrassment or harassment for any unsubstantiated and opinionated comments about friends, colleagues, and craft.]

For the past 59 years, six categories of AAAS Science Journalism Awards have been open to any individual journalist whose work has been published or broadcast in the United States. However, in 2005, perhaps reflecting its own growing global view of science and science journalism, the AAAS will feature a new category open to reporters all over the world.

The new international award, sponsored by Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical R&D, will recognize excellence in science journalism for children and families.

A preliminary announcement was made in August at the ESOF2004 meeting in Stockholm. Details regarding eligibility rules can be obtained from Ginger Pinholster, AAAS, 202-326-6421, gpinhols@aaas.org.

OUR GANG

by Jeff Grabmeier

NASW members rise high

PHOTO BY JO McNULTY, OHIO STATE

Soaring above the rest. **David Perlman**, senior science writer and editor for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, received the 2004 John Wesley Powell Award from the US Geological Survey. The award recognizes an individual whose outstanding achievements have made significant contributions to and advanced understanding of the USGS mission. David's recent topics have ranged from discoveries of the Mars Rover to the giant sequoia redwoods to volcanoes around the Pacific Rim and extensive coverage of earthquake science. "You have the ability to synthesize complex science, identify the essence and communicate it to the public in a highly readable way," said Chip Groat, director of the USGS, in his letter of congratulations.

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.

But of course, those of us in NASW already knew that!

The bird has flown… In this case, from Denver to D.C. **Diedtra Henderson** left her post as science writer for *The Denver Post* to take a new gig covering a national health and science beat for the Associated Press, in Washington. Diedtra has primary responsibility for the AP's coverage of the Food and Drug Administration, among many other things. Diedtra's new coordinates are deehenderson@ap.org.

Moving across town (as the crow flies). Another new Associated Press employee is **Marilynn Marchione**, who is a medical writer based in Milwaukee. Marilynn didn't have to go far: she comes to AP from the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, where she also covered medicine.

A little bird told us… In addition to her usual work writing books and articles, **Beryl Lieff Benderly** reports she has developed an unexpected side career leading workshops on international health writing. Over the past two years, she has led workshops (in Spanish) for Latin American health journalists in Chile and Mexico under the auspices of the International Center for Journalists, and in exotic Bethesda, Maryland, under the combined auspices of ICFJ and NIH. In July, she returned to the NIH campus to teach writing to the first class of Fogarty/Ellison Fellows, who are young scientists training for careers in clinical research by spending a year on a project in an underdeveloped country. And in October, Beryl journeyed to Panama for another NIH/ICFJ workshop for health journalists from all over Latin America. As Beryl says, "You can never tell where science writing can take you!" Beryl is at Blbink@aol.com.

A feather in his cap. NASW members are nothing if not award winning. **Malcolm Ritter** of the Associated Press, in New York, was recently selected to receive the 2004 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Media Award. Malcolm received the prestigious award for his 2003 story about efforts to develop a pill to protect against hearing loss from loud noise. Congratulate Malcolm at mritter@ap.org.

We're proud as a peacock… of freelancer **Shauna S. Roberts**. Her regular column in the patient magazine *Diabetes Self-Management*, "What Your Doctor Is Reading," received a Bronze Award in the 2004 National Health Information Awards. Shauna is a freelancer based in New Orleans. You can send her well wishes at ShaunaRoberts@nasw.org.

In the cat bird's seat. **Robin Mejia** reports that she is at work on her first television project, reporting for a CNN Presents documentary (from off camera). It should air this winter. Robin says, "Print is still my true love, but it's been an exciting summer." Robin can be found at mejia@nasw.org.

Happy as a lark. **Betsy Mason** has moved from freelancing to a job at the *Contra Costa Times* in Calif., where she covers the area's national laboratories, and other science-related stories. Betsy's e-mail is elmason@nasw.org.

A seafaring bird. One of NASW's correspondents in Japan, **Sandra Katzman**, reports she is starting her third stint as a meeting reporter. Her new client is the Ship and Ocean Foundation, a non-profit organization in Japan. Sandra covered the November 2004 Indo-Japan Dialogue on Ocean Security. Sandra is at skatzman@tky.3web.ne.jp.

The eagle has landed. Science writers in the great Southwest have been busy lately, as the next three items will attest. Starting off, **Larry O'Hanlon** is the new science writer for the Explora! Science Center in Albuquerque, NM, where visitors learn through interactive experiences in science, technology and art. Ask Larry for admission tickets at larryo@nasw.org.

Birds of a feather. At least two NASW members were selected to participate in the prestigious Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution Ocean Science Journalism fellowship. The two talented writers are **April Holladay**, a freelancer from Albuquerque, and **Liza Gross**, a science writer for the Public Library of Science's flagship journal *PLoS Biology*. The one-week residency "introduces participants to the interdisciplinary nature of ocean sciences and engineering. Through seminars, lab visits, and field work…fellows will be introduced to a broad range of current and future research programs" in ocean-related sciences." Congratulations to both of them! April is at april@wonderquest.com and Liza is at lgross@plos.org.

At the top of the pecking order. The Society for Technical Communication presented **Janet Yagoda Shagam** an award of distinction in both regional and international competitions for her article "Bone Densitometry: An Update." In addition, Janet has been selected as a Fulbright Senior Specialists Candidate. This award gives Janet the opportunity to work and teach abroad in two- to six-week increments for the next five years. Janet, who also hails from Albuquerque, is at janetyagoda@nasw.org.

NASW members have appetites for success

A big cheese. It's been a very good year for *Los Angeles Times* science writer and NASW Vice President **Robert Lee Hotz**. So good, in fact, that we are going to list his five top recent honors: 1) Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 2) National Academies Communications Award (see page 17), 3) finalist for a Pulitzer Prize in feature writing, for the six-part series "Butterfly On A Bullet" about the space shuttle Columbia accident, 4) Sigma Delta Chi non-deadline reporting award from the Society for Professional Journalists, and 5) had his coverage of the Columbia space shuttle accident included in the anthology *Best Newspaper Writing 2004*, published by the

Poynter Institute for Media Studies. Congratulate Lee at leehotz@earthlink.net.

Berry good! Freelancer **Barbara Seaman** has been extremely busy lately, with new projects and recognition for past work. Her book *The Greatest Experiment Ever Performed On Women: Exploding The Estrogen Myth* (Hyperion, 2003) appeared on the *New York Times* "New And Notable" list and was on the following 2003 best book lists: Library Journal , *Book List*, (American Library Association), *San Francisco Chronicle*, *St-Louis Post Dispatch*, Barnes and Noble, and *The Nation*. In February, she had a long piece on infertility treatments ("Is This Anyway to Have a Baby?") in *O, The Oprah Magazine*. That was followed in October by a review of books on infertility in the *Women's Review of Books*. The 25th anniversary edition of Barbara's book *The Doctors' Case Against The Pill* (Hunter House. 1995) sold out when the PBS show *American Experience* ran a film called "The Pill" twice in the past year. Barbara reports she is now putting together a 35th anniversary edition, and is looking for relevant stories that NASW members may have written or know about. Contact Barbara at brseaman@earthlink.net.

He cuts the mustard. Another award-winning author is **Steve Koppes**, a science writer at the University of Chicago News Office. His book for the adolescent age group, *Killer Rocks from Outer Space: Asteroids, Comets and Meteorites*, was named a 2003 Outstanding Science Trade Book by the National Science Teachers Association and the Children's Book Council. The book also made the 2004 Nonfiction Honor List of *Voice of Youth Advocates* magazine. Steve is at s-koppes@uchicago.edu.

Making it look easy as pie. The American Astronautical Society (AAS) gave the 2003 Eugene M. Emme Award to freelancer **Bob Zimmerman**. The award was for Bob's third book, *Leaving Earth: Space Stations, Rival Superpowers, and the Quest For Interplanetary Travel* (Joseph Henry Press, 2003). The award is given annually "to provide recognition to the truly outstanding book published each year serving public understanding about the positive impact of astronautics upon society." *Leaving Earth* is a history of manned space exploration since the Apollo lunar landings, describing the efforts by engineers and astronauts in both the United States and Russia to build the first interplanetary spaceships. Bob received the award in November at the AAS Annual Meeting. Bob can be found at zimmerman@nasw.org.

Worth his salt. After more than six years at *Science*, **David Malakoff** is moving on. He is now working for National Public Radio's science desk in Washington, where he says he will "mostly be working behind the scenes as an editor, helping develop NPR's coverage of technology, science, and society." He will, however, also be doing periodic on-air stories for NPR programs. Now, David says, "I'm in the unusual position of being able to say that I've fulfilled not just one, but two of the dreams of my youth: working for Science and NPR." Congrats, David—but I thought most boys dreamed of being a cowboy. David's new e-mail is dmalakoff@npr.org.

Pie in the face. **Norman Sperling** just published his first issue as editor of *The Journal of Irreproducible Results*, the science humor magazine. Norman says "We publish six funny issues a year, focusing on science, medicine, and academe, just as we have since 1955…JIR has fun satirizing pseudoscience, anti-science, bad science, and scams." Norman reminds NASW members that the magazine is always looking for contributions—and for you who are shy, JIR is willing to publish your work under a pseudonym! Find out more at **www.jir.com**. Reach Norman directly at nsperling@california.com.

Just peachy. Stepping back from her role as a full-time freelancer, **Ellen Gerl** has joined the faculty of Ohio University's E.W. Scripps School of Journalism in Athens as an assistant professor. Ellen will be teaching courses in the school's news editing and magazine sequences. "I plan to continue to write for magazines and hope to talk the J-school into letting me offer a science writing course in the near future," Ellen reports. Talk to Ellen at egerl@columbus.rr.com.

One smart cookie. NASW members are not just good writers—sometimes they are good sources, too. **Charlotte Libov** was recently quoted in the *Wall Street Journal*, along with her literary agent, Carole Abel, about the changing role of agents. Charlotte was quoted about how her agent encouraged her to add information about her speaking career to a proposal for the upcoming book she is co-authoring. That book, *A Woman's Guide to Heart Attack Recovery: How to Survive, Thrive and Prevent Another Heart Attack*, is tentatively scheduled for publication this spring. Charlotte is at char@ntplx.net.

Her cup of tea. After 12 years as an award-winning science journalist, NASW board member **Kathryn Brown** has become her own boss. This fall, Kathryn launched a specialty communications company called EndPoint Creative, LLC. Based in Alexandria, Vir., EndPoint Creative offers writing, editing, and consulting to science, medical, and technology organizations. Reach Kathryn at kbrown@endpointcreative.biz.

Cream of the crop. Recent Stanford graduate **Geoff Koch** took his master's degree in communication in June and immediately put it to good use. He spent the summer at the *Dallas Morning News*, interning for the paper's now-defunct Discoveries section. Now he's a science writer at Michigan State University, assigned to the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station. "Great fun so far," he says, "though there is much to learn transitioning from the Silicon Valley to soybeans." Welcome to the Midwest, Geoff! When he's not knee-high in soybeans, Geoff can be found at kochg@msu.edu.

Whey to go! **Jessica Snyder Sachs** is one of seven journalists selected for the 40th annual Alicia Patterson Journalism Fellowships. Sachs, a freelance writer and contributing editor to *Popular Science* magazine, will spend her fellowship year traveling, researching, and writing articles on the topic "Good Germs Gone Bad." She can be reached at JSachs@nasw.org.

Apple of our eye. **Emily Carlson** is another NASW member who has found new opportunities. Emily left the University of Wisconsin for the National Institutes of Health, where she is a science writer at the National Institute of General Medical Sciences. She covers cell biology, structural genomics and bioinformatics, and is in the process of developing an electronic newsletter highlighting research around the nation that's been funded by the institute. Emily is at carlsone@nigms.nih.gov. ■

REGIONAL GROUPS

by Suzanne Clancy

Northern California

PHOTO BY MARC LIEBERMAN

NCSWA's summer dinner meeting, competing head-to-head with baseball's All-Star game, drew 60 people to Berkeley to hear from synthetic biologist Jay Keasling, of UC Berkeley and Lawrence Berkeley Lab. Keasling leads a team that engineers the genetic pathways inside microbial cells to produce desirable compounds. Their main quarry is artemisinin, an anti-malaria drug with an unreliable—and costly—source from the sweet wormwood plant. Keasling's group has engineered *e. coli* bacteria to express the plant's genes and produce artemisinin cheaply. They hope to churn out the compound in "pharmaceutical factories" located where the drug is most needed, such as Africa and India. Keasling's next target is prostratin, an anti-HIV agent isolated from the stems of a Samoan tree.

Washington, DC

In July 2004, DCSWANS enjoyed a baseball outing: the Bowie Baysox versus the Allentown Curve. The Baysox lost, but the ballpark junk food was excellent, as were the after-game fireworks. In August 2004, the group visited Great Falls for a geology hike and picnic, which came off beautifully, despite on-again, off-again drizzle. Also in August, DCSWANS staffed the NASW-CASW booth at the UNITY 2004 minority journalists' conference, held at the Washington Convention Center from August 4 to 8. Organizers report that this event was a big success. Eighteen volunteers staffed it over four days, many of whom were minority journalists themselves. Three expert science writers—Warren Leary, of the *New York Times*; Ed Chen, of the *Los Angeles Times*, and Diedtra Henderson, of AP—came to the booth to talk with people about their experiences. Warren even critiqued students' articles! The volunteers handed out more than 500 tip sheets aimed at reporters who don't cover science as a regular beat. These included advice on finding science sources fast, how to read a scientific paper, fellowships and internships available, and examples of science angles in business, sports, and entertainment stories.

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.

San Diego

In July 2004, members of the San Diego Science Writers Association (SanDSWA) gathered to discuss the state of international science writing. Guest speaker was Jim Cornell, president of the International Science Writers Association (ISWA) who was in town as a speaker at the Jack Ealy Workshop on Science Journalism. This first-of-its-kind, 10-day conference provided a forum to brief Latin American journalists on technical and environmental issues with important global public policy implications. SanDSWA members had the opportunity to network with participants of the Jack Ealy Workshop (20 journalists from 13 Latin American countries) at a barbecue hosted by UC San Diego Science Communications and The Institute of the Americas. The Institute of the Americas (**www.iamericas.org/events**), founded in 1983, is an independent non-profit institution located on the UCSD campus. Its mission is to be a catalyst for promoting development and integration, emphasizing the role of the private sector, as a means to improve the economic, political, and social well-being of the people of the Americas.

In September 2004, SanDSWA members gathered atop Mt. Palomar for a behind-the-scene tour of one of the world's premier observatories. After a drive up a windy ribbon of road to the 6,140-foot summit, science writers toured the observatory grounds, where white domes poke through pine trees on the thickly forested mountain. Ashish Mahabel, a student of Caltech astronomer George Djorgovski, was working that night following up on survey work completed on Palomar's 48-inch Samuel Oschin Telescope, which spends part of its time looking for distant quasars. Using the mammoth 200-inch Hale Telescope, Mahabel's job was to examine the spectra of distant objects identified with the smaller Oschin scope, to confirm that they were indeed quasars.

Palomar's rich history dates back more than 50 years, and the observatory is credited with some of the most fascinating astronomical discoveries of the last

century, including the first Palomar Observatory Sky Survey (POSS I) carried out in 1950. The survey involved taking 1,758 plates of the northern sky and it remains the standard reference atlas for deep-sky observation. In March 2004, astronomers working at Palomar announced the discovery of Sedna, a planetoid eight-billion miles from Earth and the most distant body, to date, known to orbit the sun.

New England

It's become a summer tradition for the New England Science Writers Association to indulge in a purely social gathering in August on the Boston waterfront. About 45 science writers gathered on Aug. 19, 2004, at Tias, a hopping venue with outdoor areas for drinking, talking and heavy networking. A highlight was Bob Cooke's showing of enormous digital prints of photos taken in Norway on one of his recent excursions since moving from Long Island to a suburb west of Boston. The evening offered a great antidote to the social isolation that's an occupational hazard for freelancers, and a chance for people to escape from their institutional grooves and catch up with colleagues they see once in a blue moon.

New York

Avast ye swabbies! About 40 members of Science Writers in New York (SWINY) braved overcast skies on a June 2004 evening for a sail aboard the Hudson River sloop *Clearwater*. Shortly after shoving off from the 79th Street Pier, the "crew" was put to work hoisting sails. "Dragging 3,300 square feet of canvas 70 some odd feet up the mast took a lot of muscle and teamwork," reports freelance writer Alan S. Brown. But the trip wasn't just about testing one's sea legs. The sailors also learned about the biology of the Hudson River and the geologic history of its valley.

NY Urban Park Rangers took another group of adventuresome New Yorkers for an early August 2004 tour of Orchard Beach—a Robert Moses project on the northern shore of the Bronx that was created by endless truckloads of sand. They braved a drizzle and a number of pretty determined mosquitoes to trek through some of the only meadows in the city allowed to return to their natural state. The tireless rangers also took them out on a jetty to see a tiny island frequented by harbor seals in winter, where they learned about the nearby "Execution Island" and, as the story was told, the sadistic British soldiers who tied American prisoners to the shore at low tide.

Nature is probably not the first thing that comes to mind when you hear "the Bronx" but that's exactly what a hardy group of SWINY members saw when they canoed part of the Bronx River in September. Like a tour backstage at the Metropolitan Opera, the trip gave paddlers a chance to see a side of this borough that few experience—places where herons and egrets still fish and the last of New York City's old-growth forests drape across the river. There was also science aplenty as members of the Bronx River Alliance pointed out how their staff is helping restore the river's ecosystem and teaching environmental science to local students.

In October 2004, SWINY co-sponsored a discussion with the Stevens Institute of Technology on, "Science, Technology, Public Opinion and Presidential Elections" giving those attending the New York Academy of Sciences event great insight into the November election. The presentations sparked lively debates among both panel members and the audience and were followed by a much less political wine-and-cheese reception.

Also in October 2004, SWINY threw a social in conjunction with Mediabistro.com. About 50 science, medical and technology writers/editors—including several new faces—came to the Windfall Lounge in midtown Manhattan to chat with colleagues. It was the fourth SWINY social, a quarterly event started in 2004 to enhance the science writer community in New York.

New Mexico

The fledgling New Mexico Science Writers Association (NMSWA) gathered momentum over the summer with a field trip to the National Solar Observatory, near Cloudcroft, New Mexico. A small, but dedicated, contingent of writers and their families made the trip and were treated to a fascinating tour of the mountaintop observatories, a chance to chat with solar scientists, breathtaking views of thunderstorms rolling over distant White Sands—and a great meal courtesy of NMSWAn and NSO science writer Dave Dooling and his family. In August 2004, several writers gathered again at Kelly's Grill and Brewery, in Albuquerque, to compare notes and discuss future events. NMSWA members, including any NASW member passing through town, are welcome to attend monthly gatherings at that same watering hole—set for the every fourth Thursday of every month at 6 p.m. For more info contact Larry O'Hanlon: larryo@nasw.org. In September 2004, O'Hanlon represented NMSWA at a University of New Mexico science graduate student career seminar. Larry plugged science writing as a career path for the many students wondering what to do with their futures.

Northern California

UC Berkeley's Dan Kammen wowed some 70 NCSWAns in September 2004 at the Basque Cultural Center, in South San Francisco, with a lively account of the pros and cons of the hydrogen economy. Kammen, who directs the Renewable and Appropriate Energy Laboratory (**socrates.berkeley.edu/~rael**), painted a picture of a technology that is part of our future, but not quite ready for prime time. Kammen observed that hydrogen's

most critical function will be to store energy for later use. "It can be made when you have electricity from the wind or the sun, and then stored for when we need power," he said, noting that analysts and politicians typically overlook that advantage. His own favorite mode of making hydrogen, he noted, is to engineer bacteria that emit hydrogen as a metabolic byproduct. But the economic conversion will be slow, especially when it comes to vehicles. Kammen said, "To invest in fuel-cell technology is to commit yourself to a long-term path of innovation. It's a tough sell for immediate greenhouse-gas relief."

In October, NCSWA sponsored its third in a semi-regular series of writing workshops for Bay Area journalists and students. For a full report, see page 16 of this issue. ■

IN MEMORIAM

Bert Kruger Smith

Bert Kruger Smith, author and special consultant to the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, died on July 26 at the age of 88. She had been an NASW member since 1961.

A native Texan, Smith received her undergraduate degree from the University of Missouri, a master's degree from the University of Texas, and an honorary doctorate from the University of Missouri.

Early in her career, she and her husband published and edited the *Daily Coleman Democrat Voice* newspaper, in Coleman, Texas. In 1952, Smith joined the Hogg Foundation, an administrative unit of the University of Texas at Austin where she served as a writer and head of the publications program until her retirement in 1999.

For nearly 50 years, Smith wrote extensively about the mentally ill and the elderly and served as an advisor to community groups, state agencies, and volunteer organizations. At the Hogg Foundation, she headed the publications program, was a program officer, and taught courses at UT Austin in mental health information, special education, and gerontology. She was an emeritus board member of the foundation.

In 1952, a series of articles written by Smith, on behalf of the foundation, on the state of mental health care in Texas ran in 61 Texas newspapers and sparked reforms to the code governing the Texas State Hospitals and Special Schools. Smith also played a major role in ensuring the concerns of Texans were heard and addressed at the 1980 White House Conference on Aging.

Smith was the author of more than 100 articles, pamphlets, and leaflets, as well as *A Teaspoon of Honey* (a novel) and non fiction works, *Looking Forward*, *The Pursuit of Dignity*, *Aging in America*, *Insights for Uptights*, *Your Non- Learning Child: His World Upside Down*, and *No Language But a Cry*. For 10 years she hosted a radio program, "The Human Condition," that was broadcast to over 100 stations.

Smith was the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including the Women in Communications Lifetime Achievement Award and the City of Austin Distinguished Service Award. She was the first recipient of the Bert Kruger Smith Vision Award, named in her honor to recognize a person for foresight and energy in creating and/or implementing programs, services, or legislation which serves older adults. In 1988 she was inducted into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame.

Robert O. Stith

Long-time NASW member Robert O. Stith, 90, died Sept. 3 in Columbus, Ohio.

Stith was born April 11, 1914 in German Village, Ohio. After completing high school he took a job with the Battelle Memorial Institute, in Columbus, and worked his entire 50-year career there. Battelle develops and commercializes technology and manages laboratories for customers. Stith started as a storeroom clerk and was the company's first lab technician. Later he founded the public relations department, the news department, the first personnel operation, and retired as manager of public relations. Stith was involved with coining the term "Xerography."

Stith was a member of Public Relations Society of America and founding member and first accredited member of the Central Ohio Chapter. In addition to NASW, he was a member of the Professional Society of Journalists and the Press Club of Ohio. He helped start the Central Ohio International Science Fair and facilitated the Battelle Planetarium at COSI.

Gerard Piel

Gerard Piel, 89, a science writer and editor who helped revive *Scientific American* magazine a half-century ago and made it thrive, died September 5 at Mount Sinai Hospital, in Queens. The cause was a stroke he suffered in February. He joined NASW in 1950.

Piel and associates took a gamble in 1947 to buy the magazine with money borrowed from people he called "a lot of very lovely guys." They believed that there were enough intelligent laymen to support a periodical that discussed science in depth. Piel and his partners revamped the hoary publication as a timely and authoritative monthly. They insisted, for instance, that more articles be written by people directly engaged in the subject matter.

Four years and a million dollars in venture capital

later, the magazine began to turn a profit. Revived, the magazine, which was established in 1845, counts more than 100 Nobel laureates among its contributors. *Scientific American* now publishes 15 foreign-language editions. Its circulation reached one million under Piel's leadership as publisher. He took the chairmanship of the company in 1984, and in 1986 he oversaw the sale of the magazine to Verlagsgruppe Georg von Holtzbrinck, its current publisher.

Gerard Piel was born on March 1, 1915, in Woodmere, NY, on Long Island. He was a scion of a brewing family that founded Piel Brothers Brewery, in 1883. Piel graduated magna cum laude as a history major from Harvard in 1937, and started as an editorial trainee at Time Inc. Family lore has it that one year after college he was named science editor of *Life* magazine because his boss deemed him qualified by being "certifiably illiterate in science."

"The idea was that if I could understand what I was writing and publishing, then so could the reader," Mr. Piel explained years later. "I became a science journalist and my education has been continuing ever since."

He kept the job at *Life* for six years. He briefly was assistant to the president of the Henry J. Kaiser Company and associated companies in Oakland, Calif., before preparing for the acquisition and makeover of *Scientific American*.

Piel was the author of several books, most recently *The Age of Science: What Scientists Learned in the 20th Century* (Basic Books, 2001). He was a past president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

(Source: New York Times *obituary)*

PHOTO COURTESY OF REZA SAMIEI

Haleh Samiei

Haleh Samiei, an NASW member in North Potomac, Md., died Dec. 4 following a long battle with cancer.

She became a science writer after receiving her bachelor's and doctoral degrees from Simon Fraser University, in Vancouver, and initially pursuing a career as a researcher in molecular biology. Haleh discovered a passion for writing about science and enrolled in several writing workshops, eventually receiving a master's degree in writing from The Johns Hopkins University.

Her byline soon stood out, and not only because of her hard-to-spell Iranian name. Haleh had a gift for science writing that won her assignments in a wide range of publications. She may be the only NASW member to write for both *The Tehran Post* and the *Washington Post*, for which she contributed a column in the weekly health section.

Haleh was active in the NASW community and also belonged to the D.C. Science Writers Association, the Canadian Science Writers' Association, and the Association for Women in Science.

Her grace as both a writer and friend was never stronger than during the past few years, as she regaled family and friends with e-mail messages that combined scientific insights about her long medical treatments with the warmth that so endeared her to science writers and many others in the Maryland area and beyond.

She is survived by her husband, Reza, and two young children.

(Contributed by David Jarmul)

Jean McDonald

Jean Katherine McDonald, former congressional press secretary and spokeswoman for the federal Office of Technology Assessment (OTA), died of metastatic lung cancer, on Jan. 24, 2005, in Arlington, Vir. She had been an NASW member since 1990.

McDonald worked for the late congressional representative Joseph L. Fisher (D-Va.) while he was running for office and then was his press secretary from 1975 to 1980. Just before he lost reelection in 1980, she became a press official with the tiny OTA, Congress's research agency for science and technology issues, working there until the agency was closed in 1995.

Subsequently, she volunteered for the National Museum of Natural History, the National Zoo and the Washington Opera, and became an active member of the DC Science Writers Association for at least 12 years (that's as far back as the DCSWA database records go).

Born in San Francisco, she graduated from Stanford University in 1952. She married and moved to Arlington, Vir. in 1967 where she raised her children and volunteered with the Arlington schools, Girl Scouts, Head Start, Common Cause, and in county politics.

After working for Congress, McDonald became a world traveler, taking trips to Africa, Australia, Borneo, Costa Rica, France, the Galapagos Islands, the former Soviet Union, Italy, Peru, and Turkey. She is survived by two daughters, two granddaughters, and several grandchimps at the Oakland (Calif.) Zoo where her daughter, Kelly, is a zoo keeper.

(Source: Washington Post *and DCSWA Web site)*

Charles C. Bennett

NASW has learned of the death of Charles C. Bennett of Davis, Calif. He was an NASW member since 1963. ■

NOTICES FROM DIANE

by Diane McGurgan

Dues, roster, database


PHOTO BY ANDREW SKOLNICK

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. I will accept them up until I send off the database for printing, but you must hurry. 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**) please give me an address. It is very time consuming to look everyone up.

Awards — important

Transition of the NASW national meeting to the fall includes a change to the Science-in-Society Awards program cycle with the next SIS Awards presented in fall 2006. Watch this column and nasw-announce for new deadline information. The CASW Victor Cohn Award in Medical Science Writing deadline remains the same (July 31). ■

BOOKS BY AND FOR MEMBERS

by Ruth Winter

Inventing Beauty **by Teresa Riordan (NASW), published by Broadway Books.**

Riordan has written a timely book as the TV beams the extreme makeovers of people willing to have their features re-sculptured in prime time and aging baby boomers break down the doors of dermatologists to have a deadly poison injected into their wrinkles. The freelance patents columnist for the *New York Times*, Riordan explores that strange intersection of science, fashion, and business. Riordon reveals that back when she was shopping the proposal for this book, she received a vitriolic rejection from an editor who clearly thought that she was some kind of atavistic nut for even considering that beauty might be something more complex than a male-imposed conspiracy. *Publishers Weekly* —sweet revenge—gave *Inventing Beauty* a starred review. Riordan can be reached at tr@inventingbeauty.com or triordan@starpower.net. NASW wanting a review copy can contact Joanna Pinsker at jpinsker@randomhouse.com.

The Depths of Space: The Story of the Pioneer Planetary Probes **by Mark Wolverton (NASW), published by Joseph Henry Press.**

Wolverton, a Philadelphia freelance, writes that Pioneer is perhaps the most efficient, reliable, and cost-effective program to come out of NASA and that its missions are a shining example of how a small and talented group of people can, against all odds, pull something off that has never been done before. Wolverton laments that despite its enduring contributions, the Pioneer project remains a footnote in space history, little more than a humble prologue to its inheritors. *The Depths of Space* recounts the history of Pioneer both as a scientific and technological achievement and as the story of the exceptional people who made the program possible. Wolverton can be reached via his Web site at home.earthlink.net/~exetermw. The book's publicist is Robin Pinnel at rpinnel@nas.edu.

The Best American Science and Nature Writing 2004 **edited by Steven Pinker, published by Houghton Mifflin.**

Steven Pinker, the Johnstone Family Professor in the department of psychology at Harvard University and author of *The Blank Slate* and *How The Mind Works*, chose the selections for the anthology. Included is a piece by Philip Boffey (NASW) editorial writer for the *New York Times* titled "Fearing the Worst Should Anyone Produce a Clone." Another NASW member whose article was selected is Meredith Small, an Ithaca, NY freelance. The article titled "Captivated" appeared in *Natural History*. The press representative is Meg Wilson at megan_wilson@hmco.com or 617-351-5000.

Creating Connections: Museums and the Public Understanding of Current Research **edited by David Chittenden, Graham Farmelo, and Bruce V. Lewenstein (NASW), published by Altamira Press.**

Science museums are in the business of making science accessible to the public—a public constantly bombarded with new information and research results. *Creating Connections* looks at the public understanding of research (PUR) and how it affects what science museums do. What are the opportunities and critical issues in PUR? What strategies are working and what are some pitfalls? *Creating Connections* will be an invaluable resource for science museum professionals who want to guide their institutions and their visitors toward a new understanding of and appreciation for current research. Co-author David Chittenden is vice president for education at the Science Museum of

Minnesota, Graham Farmelo is director of the Dana Centre Project at the Science Museum, London and Associate Professor of Physics at Northeastern University, and Bruce Lewenstein is associate professor of science communication at Cornell University. Contributors include NASW members Marc Airhart, *Earth and Sky*, Rick Borchelt, Whitehead Institute, and Cornelia Dean, *New York Times*. Lewenstein can be reached at b.lewenstein@cornell.edu or 607-255-8310. For a review copy, contact Anne Ray at phone 301-459-3366 ext. 5651, FAX 301-429-5748, or aray@altamirapress.com.

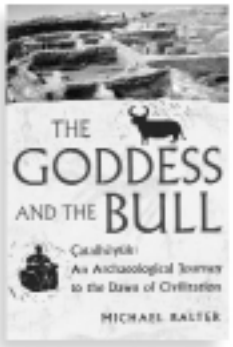
The Best American Science Writing 2004 **edited by Dava Sobel and Jesse Cohen, published by Ecco (an imprint of HarperCollins).**

Guest editor Dava Sobel, bestselling author of *Longitude* and *Galileo's Daughter*, and series editor Jesse Cohen have selected 23 articles on topics ranging from biology, physics, biotechnology, and astronomy, to anthropology, genetics, evolutionary theory, and cognition for this, the fifth edition in the *Best American Science Writing* series. What makes these articles "the best?" As Sobel puts it in her introduction, "…the pieces impart genuine pleasure via the writers' choice of words and the rhythm of their phrases. 'I wish I'd written that,' was my own frequent reaction to the articles I ultimately chose." The work of two NASW members appears in this collection: Tom Siegfried for "The Science of Strategy" (*Dallas Morning News*) and John Noble Wilford for "A Tense Border's More" (*New York Times*). The press representative for the book is Jill Bernstein at jill.bernstein@harpercollins.com or 212-207-7740.

Taming Bipolar Disorder **by Lori Oliwenstein (NASW), published by Alpha Books.**

Oliwenstein, a science writer for the University of Southern California's Health Sciences Public Relations Office, describes life at its extremes describing the deepest of depressions and the wildest of euphorias. It's about the struggle to get diagnosed, find treatments, and forge a life out of chaos. The book details the symptoms of bipolar disorder, considers the various forms of the illness and how it differs from other mental illnesses, and details how it progresses. The book examines methods of controlling the illness and offers guidance on navigating through the health care system. It contains a review of current medications used for treatment, and information on how individuals can learn to keep pace with their own circadian and social rhythms to help halt the illness in its tracks. In addition, the book details the issues that children and adolescents with bipolar disorder may face. Stories of courage and triumph from individuals who live with this mental illness are also included. For more information, to interview the author or to request a review copy, contact Gardi Wilks at gardi@wilkspr.com or 708-366-8389, or Vicki Skelton at Vicki.skelton@pearsoned.com or 805-523-9270. Oliwenstein can be reached at lorio@nasw.org.

The Goddess and the Bull: Çatalhöyük, An Archaeological Journey to the Dawn of Civilization **by Michael Balter (NASW), published by The Free Press.**



Balter, *Science*'s former Paris bureau chief and now one of the magazine's chief archaeology and human evolution writers, tells the story of 9,500 year-old Çatalhöyuk in south-central Turkey, the largest Neolithic village ever discovered. The site was first excavated by British archaeologist James Mellaart in the 1960s, who found evidence of what he believed was a Mother Goddess cult. As a result, Çatalhöyuk is today considered the Mecca for Mother Goddess worshippers. After four seasons, however, Mellaart was banned from the site by Turkish authorities after he was blamed for the disappearance of a fabulous Bronze Age treasure. Beginning in 1993, an international team led by Stanford University archaeological rebel Ian Hodder renewed work at Çatalhöyuk, using the latest scientific techniques to unravel the mystery of why as many as 8,000 people abandoned the hunter-gatherer way of life to congregate together on Turkey's isolated Konya Plain. Balter tells the story of Çatalhöyuk through the lives of the archaeologists themselves, who become vivid characters in his nonfiction novel. Balter developed the idea for this book after writing about the dig for Science in 1998. For further information contact Balter at mbalter@compuserve.com.

Marine Protected Areas For Whales, Dolphins And Porpoises: A World Handbook for Cetacean Habitat Conservation **by Erich Hoyt (NASW), published by Earthscan / James & James.**

What would it be like to be the scientist rather than the science writer? Hoyt started out as a science journalist but in the last few years began to write scientific papers and make presentations at conferences. "I still do some popular writing but increasingly my clips are in conference proceedings or journals," he says. Hoyt is senior research fellow with the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS), and co-director of the Far East Russia Orca Project. He wrote this book because,

after researching and writing several other books on whales and dolphins, he realized that there was a gap in habitat research and conservation. "In fact, the field of marine protected areas research, management and policy was proceeding independently of the growing body of whale and dolphin research," he writes. "I have tried to put the two areas together. This is not a book for the general public, but is aimed at cetacean researchers, local and international conservation groups, environment and fisheries ministries, marine protected area professionals and students." He writes of the crucial habitat needs and protection requirements of some 84 species. For a review copy contact Jennifer Poole at +44 (0)20-7387-8558 or jpoole@earthscan.co.uk. Hoyt can be reached at erich.hoyt@mac.com.

***The Proteus Effect: Stem Cells and Their Promise for Medicine* by Ann B. Parson (NASW), published by Joseph Henry Press/National Academy of Sciences.**

Parson, a South Dartmouth, Mass. freelance, shows readers what stem cells are, where they come from, and why they possibly represent a turning point in medicine. She also explores the ethical debates associated with stem-cell research. *The Library Journal* wrote the *Proteus Effect* "is an engaging and well-researched account of stem-cell research. … Most current books on stem-cell research are technical, somewhat biased, or told from one point of view. Parson has presented a fair, well-rounded view of the subject. The *San Jose Mercury News* said "It may well be the most important science book of the year." The press representative for the book is Robin Pinnel at 202-334-1902 or rpinnel@nas.edu. Contact Parson at parson-a@verizon.net or 508-984-1955.

***Cancer-Gate: How to Win the Losing Cancer War* by Samuel S. Epstein, MD (NASW), published by Baywood Publishing.**

Epstein, professor emeritus of Environmental and Occupational Medicine at the School of Public Health, University of Illinois at Chicago and chairman of the Cancer Prevention Coalition, has written a book which warns "contrary to three decades of promises, we are losing the winnable war against cancer, and that the hand-in-glove generals of the federal National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the private *nonprofit* American Cancer Society (ACS) have betrayed us." These institutions, Epstein alleges, have spent tens of billions of taxpayer and charity dollars primarily targeting silver-bullet cures, strategies that have largely failed, while virtually ignoring strategies for preventing cancer in the first place. Epstein maintains that close ties to industry have transformed the NCI and ACS into cheerleaders for special interests rather than stewards of the public interest. Following a detailed indictment of what he believes are public betrayals, Epstein explains how we can "take back" the war against cancer with a wide range of strategies. For a review copy, contact Julie Krempa at 631-691-1270 or baywood@baywood.com. Epstein can be reached at 312-996-2297 or Epstein@ulc.edu.

***The Diabetes Diet: Dr. Bernstein's Low-Carbohydrate Solution* by Richard K. Bernstein, MD (NASW), published by Little, Brown & Company.**

Bernstein, a Type 1 diabetic, says he would have been dead by now if he had continued the high-carbohydrate, low-fat diet prescribed for him in his youth. Now in his 70s, he says he has defied the actuarial tables (he should died in 1976) and is healthier than ever because he follows the routine he developed for his patients. His book focuses on protein, fat, and slow-acting carbohydrate, such as leafy and whole-plant vegetables and some kinds of root vegetables, which tend to be broken down more slowly and continuously, creating a satisfied feeling for a longer time after eating. His plan also prevents the blood sugar roller-coaster ride caused by a carbohydrate-heavy diet, which can result in obesity, increased blood pressure, and damage to the lining of the blood vessels. While half of the book is dedicated to low-carb recipes, Bernstein differentiates his from the other low-carb diets on the market by thoroughly explaining the science behind his method. To arrange an interview with Bernstein reach him at 212-522-8074 or contact Amanda Erickson at Amanda.Erickson@twbg.com.

***Career Opportunities in The Publishing Industry: Newspapers, Magazines, and Books* by Fred Yager and Jan Yager (NASW), published by Facts on File, Inc.**

An extensive guide to 86 careers in the publishing industry including newspapers, magazines, and books covering editorial, writer, marketing, art, production, management, and related jobs. Each profile includes an overview of that position as well as salary range, employment and advancement prospects, educational and training, experience, special skills and personality traits, a career ladder, and tips for entry. There is also an industry outlook as well as extensive appendixes including undergraduate and graduate degree programs, unions and associations, trade shows and conferences, and

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more. Fred Yager worked at the *Associated Press* for 13 years as a reporter, entertainment writer, and film critic. Jan Yager, who worked at Macmillan Publishing Company and Grove Press, has run Hannacroix Creek Books since 1996. Husband and wife, the Yagers live in Connecticut. Jan Yager can be reached at jyager@aol.com.

New Editions

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

Expanded and updated, the book describes the relative safety and side effects of more than 12,000 ingredients that end up in our food. This includes new dangers such as bioterrorism and old problems such as antibiotic and hormone residues used in raising farm animals and crops. Also, nearly two-thirds of the fish, almost half the fruits, and more than 10 percent of the vegetables consumed by Americans each year are imported. This amounts to more than 20 billion pounds of produce only two to three percent of which undergo FDA inspection. Press representative is Tina DeGraff at tdegraff@randomhouse.com or 212-572-2545.

***Let's Stop Destroying Our Children: Society's Most Pressing Problem* by Shirley Camper Soman ACSW (NASW), published by iUniverse.**

This updated book, first published in 1974, is even more pertinent today as busy, working parents often do not take time to predict perils to their children such as inadequate caregivers and lurking predators. Soman, a social worker, maintains that "Many of America's severe problems—crime, discontent, family breakdown, drug addiction would have been considerably far less severe (and ameliorated to a large extent) if our society chose to put its money where its mouth is with the programs and plans that most directly affect the well-being of the population group known as the young." Soman can be reached at www.shirleycampersoman.com or 212-787-8722.

***American Medical Association Family Medical Guide 4th Edition managing* editor Donna Kotulak, published by Wiley.**

At 1,184 pages, you can use this book to look up medical condition you are trying to explain or pick it up for exercise at your desk. Reviewed by nearly 50 practicing physicians from a cross section of medical specialties, the book provides authoritative guidance on hundreds of diseases and disorders and all the latest tests, treatments, procedures, and drugs—from SARS and portable defibrillators to LASIK and morning-after pills—and provides new or greatly expanded coverage of genetic testing, sexual orientation, learning disabilities, ADD and ADHD, pregnancy, stem cell transplants, flu shots, and drug abuse. The publicist for this completely revised and updated book is Dottie DeHart at 828-459-9637 or Dottie@rdpr.com. ■

Send material about new books to Ruth Winter, 44 Holly Drive, Short Hills, NJ 07078, or e-mail ruthwrite@aol.com. Include the name of the publicist and appropriate contact information, as well as how you prefer members get in touch with you.

NEW MEMBERS

CALIFORNIA: Carrie Black*, Gotham Writers' Workshop Online; Heather J. Henter* UC San Diego; Karen Josephson*, UC San Diego; Lorraine Lica* UC San Diego; Michael O'Neill, *BioBeat* Online Mag., Foster City; Rebecca Z. Sokol, Keck School of Medicine, USC; Annette Violet West*, Cal State U Bakersfield. **COLORADO**: Jennifer Lowell*, Colorado State U; Cherrie Winner, freelance, Grand Junction. **CONNECTICUT**: Luciane Liguori*, U of Conn, W. Hartford. **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**: Michael Felton, *Today's Chemist at Work* (Amer Chem Soc); David Filmore, *Modern Drug Discovery* (Amer Chem Soc); Alan Kotok, *Science*'s Next Wave; Lisa Richwine, Reuters; Karen E. Ross*, NIH Fellowship; Wilder D. Smith, Amer Chem Soc. **FLORIDA**: Meghan E. Kreeger*, U of So. Fla/Moffit Cancer Ctr. **GEORGIA**: Robin Tricoles, Georgia State U. **IDAHO**: John Roach, freelance, Ketchum. **IOWA**: Debra Gibson, Iowa State U. **MARYLAND**: Alicia F. Ault, freelance, Kensington; Chris Emery, Ecological Soc of Amer; Scott C. Jenkins,Editor, *The Gold Sheets*, FDC Reports; Runa Musib*, Johns Hopkins U; Stacy L . Small*, U of Missouri; Hattie C. Wolfe, freelance, Baltimore. **MASSACHUSETTS**: Nijsje Dorman, *BioTechniques*, Westborough; Jane P. Gardner, freelance, N. Chelmsford; Stu Hutson*, Boston U; Matthew T. Kinsey* Boston U; Charlene Lobo, *Nature* publishing group, Cambridge; John Rubin, John Rubin Productions, Cambridge; David Shiga, Sky Publishing; Melissa Stewart, freelance, Acton. **MINNESOTA**: Yvonne Hubmayr, freelance (Mayo Clinic); Jean Thilmany, Amer Soc of Mech Engineers, Minneapolis. **MONTANA**: Megan Raby*, Montana State U. **NEW JERSEY**: Jeanna R. Bryner, *Science World*, Jersey City; Charlotte LoBuono, Advanstar Medical Economics Drug Topics, Montvale; Janine Sullivan Love, freelance/The Write Solutions, Parsippany; Anne Sasso, freelance, Pittstown. **NEW MEXICO**: Kristina Anderson, EasyRead Copywriting, Albuquerque. **NEW YORK**: Joseph A. DeAngelis*, Wilkes U, Lynbrook; Graciela Flores, freelance (*Natural History* and *The Scientist*); Jeri Helen, freelance/Nature Publishing, Brooklyn; Rebecca Kessler*, NYU; Sandra

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BULLETIN BOARD

ROSALYNN CARTER FELLOWSHIPS FOR MENTAL HEALTH JOURNALISM

The Carter Center Mental Health Program is accepting applications for the Rosalynn Carter Fellowships for Mental Health Journalism. Six fellows are awarded grants of $10,000 each to study a selected topic regarding mental health or mental illnesses. Fellows are matched with a Fellowship Advisory Board member. Applicants must have at least two years experience in print or electronic journalism, submit an application packet, and attend two annual meetings at The Carter Center in Atlanta. For additional information visit **www.cartercenter.org** or contact Rebecca G. Palpant, M.S., The Carter Center Mental Health Program, One Copenhill, 453 Freedom Parkway, Atlanta, GA 30307; phone 404-420-5165; e-mail ccmhp@emory.edu. Deadline: April 25, 2005. Awards will be announced July 15, 2005.

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

NEW MEMBERS

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"Sam" Mattingly, L'Oreal USA, NYC; Rebecca B. Miller*, Columbia Teachers College; Maria Paterlini, freelance, NYC; Elizabeth H. Quill*, Ithaca College; Roger Segelken, News Service, Cornell U. **NORTH CAROLINA**: Tara Hun-Dorris, freelance (THD Editorial), Youngsville; Patricia Rieser, freelance, Durham. **OHIO**: Melissa Burpo*, Miami University, Oxford. **RHODE ISLAND**: Sydney C. Gary, Manisses Communications Group, Inc. Providence. **TENNESSEE**: Catherine Crawley*, U of Tennessee, Knoxville. **TEXAS**: Tom Curtis, U of Texas Med Branch, Galveston; Jim Kelly, U of Texas Med Branch, Galveston; Patricia Walters-Fischer, freelance, Helotes. **VIRGINIA**: John Doria, freelance, Springfield; Amber Jones, NSF; **WASHINGTON**: Elizabeth Sharpe*, U of Washington, Seattle. **WISCONSIN**: Kendra Rand*, U of Wisconsin, Madison; Katie Weber, College of Agricultural & Life Sciences, U of Wisconsin. CANADA: Jeffrey B. Matthews, Immune Tolerance Network (UC San Francisco), Vancouver; Miriam Shuchman, freelance, Toronto. ■

**Student member*