

The Newsletter of The National Association of

# ScienceWriters™

## FEATURES

- Geeta Anand Wins Cohn Prize 3
- TOPP.org is Tops on the Web 4
- A 12-Step Program  
for Saving Journalism 4
- Spokane Meeting Recap 5
- Science and Surprises  
from New Horizons 10
- Science Cabaret 11
- Call for NASW Entertainers 11
- Tax Breaks for Freelancers 11
- Satire and Science Writers 12
- Discovery Acquires  
HowStuffWorks.com 13

## NEWS

- NASW Annual  
Membership Meeting Minutes 15
- AAAS Fellows 19

## COLUMNS

- President's Letter 14
- Cyberbeat 16
- News From Afar 18
- Our Gang 20
- In Memoriam 22
- Regional Groups 24
- Letters 25
- Notices from Diane 26
- Books By and For Members 27
- New Members 31
- Bulletin Boards/Ads 29

## SCIENCE IN SOCIETY AWARDS PRESENTED

The winners of the NASW 2007 Science-in-Society Journalism Awards are: Nicholas Wade for his book *Before the Dawn: Recovering the Lost History of Our Ancestors*, Kenneth Weiss and Usha Lee McFarling for their *Los Angeles Times* series "Altered Oceans," and David Sington for his documentary "Dimming the Sun," which appeared on PBS's NOVA television series.

In *Before the Dawn*, Nicholas Wade, a science reporter for the *New York Times*, describes the remarkable insights that genetic analysis can provide about the evolution of our species. The judges were impressed by the skillful weaving of the wide range of scientific findings about human origins into an engaging narrative. One judge said that this book "provides more of the meat to flesh out the skeletons in our closet."

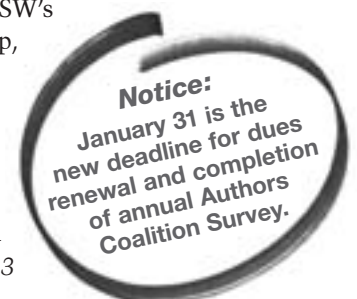
Published July 30 to August 3, 2006, the five-part series "Altered Oceans" by *Los Angeles Times* reporters Kenneth Weiss and Usha Lee McFarling describes how human activity is changing the composition of the oceans, and with it the habitats of many ocean creatures. Describing the series as a tour de force, the judges were impressed with how the reporters looked at both the ancient past and the future of our oceans and convincingly predicted trouble for present-day humans. The series won the 2007 Pulitzer Prize in Explanatory Reporting.

Originally aired on PBS on April 18, 2006, "Dimming the Sun" investigates the growing evidence that air pollution is decreasing the amount of sunlight reaching Earth. David Sington, who wrote and produced the documentary, masterfully explains the complex interplay between the processes of global dimming and global warming. Describing the show as "unforgettable," one of the judges said, "It was a revelation to me how bad things are."

The individual and team winners each received a cash prize of \$2,500 at an awards banquet on Oct. 21, 2007 during NASW's annual Science in Society meeting and workshop, held in Spokane, Wash.

In addition, the judges awarded honorable mentions to John Moir for his book *Return of the Condor: The Race to Save Our Largest Bird from Extinction* and to Orlando de Guzman for a series of reports entitled "Myanmar's Hidden

*continued on page 3*





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**SUBMISSION DEADLINES**

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Nicholas Wade

PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW YORK TIMES



Kenneth Weiss

PHOTO BY FRICK LOOMIS, LOS ANGELES TIMES



Usha Lee McFarling

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE LOS ANGELES TIMES



David Sington

PHOTO BY DOX PRODUCTIONS

AIDS Epidemic," which appeared on Public Radio International's "The World."

The final judging committee included Alan Boyle, science editor at MSNBC.com; Julie Ann Miller, former editor of *Science News*; and John Wilkes, director emeritus of the science communication program at the University of California, Santa Cruz. The Science in Society Awards committee was chaired by Robert Finn, San Francisco Bureau Chief for the *International Medical News Group*. In addition to the final committee, NASW thanks the volunteers who served on preliminary screening committees: Tom Abate (*San Francisco Chronicle*), Linda Billings (SETI Institute), Robert Finn, John Franklin (University of Maryland), Sara Harris (Society for Neuroscience), Michael Lemonick (freelance), Philip Manning (freelance), Rosie Mestel (*Los Angeles Times*), Curt Suplee (freelance), David Tenenbaum (The Why Files), Mitchell Waldrop (freelance), and Carl Zimmer (freelance).

"We received a total of 162 entries published or broadcast in 2006 for this year's awards," Finn said. "This made quite a job for our volunteer judges, especially since a great many of the entries were outstanding. Nevertheless, we hope even more science journalists will enter their work next year, giving the judges even more of a challenge."

NASW established the Science in Society Awards to provide recognition—without subsidy from any professional or commercial interest—for investigative or interpretive reporting about the sciences and their impact for good and bad. The award has been presented annually since 1972.

Entry forms for the 2008 competition are available at [www.NASW.org](http://www.NASW.org). ■

(Source: news release)

## WALL STREET JOURNAL'S GEETA ANAND WINS 2007 VICTOR COHN PRIZE

Geeta Anand, a New York-based senior special writer for the *Wall Street Journal's* investigative group, has been awarded the 2007 Victor Cohn Prize for Excellence in Medical Science Reporting for a powerful series of exhaustively reported stories displaying extraordinary narrative technique, emotional power, and sharp, intelligent analysis.

In articles for the *Journal*, Anand has turned her skills on the crisis confronting a biotech company when it was asked to provide an experimental drug for a dying child, on the issues raised by the use of a \$600,000-per-year biotechnology drug, and on how rare diseases can become huge money makers for drug companies.

The judges noted her "admirable display of narrative power," and said that she "combined the perspective of a business journalist with the heart of a sensitive and empathetic reporter." Anand's stories turn complicated business and medical issues into engaging human tales "that hold the reader spellbound all the way," the judges said.

In his nominating letter, *Journal* Page One editor Michael W. Miller noted that Anand "has explored the ethical challenges confronting physicians, scientists, companies and families as breathtaking advances in science are turned into treatments for life-threatening illnesses." She has also "written hard-hitting stories questioning the prices companies are charging for new medicines, exposing the enormous profit margins they carry and the effect of the high prices on patients' access to the drugs."



Geeta Anand (left) receives the 2007 Victor Cohn Prize from CASW President Cris Russell.

PHOTO BY LYNNE FRIEDMANN

Anand joined the *Journal's* Boston bureau in 1998 and in 2001 moved to the New York bureau to cover biotechnology. She formerly worked for the *Boston Globe*, the *Rutland (VT) Herald*, and the *Cape Cod News*. She is the author of a 2006 book, *The Cure: How A Father Raised \$100 Million—and Bucked the Medical Establishment—in a Quest to Save his Children*. Born in Mumbai, India, Anand is a graduate of Dartmouth College. She is a member of the South Asian Journalists Association.

This was the eighth presentation of the Cohn Prize for Excellence in Medical Science Reporting: a prize for a body of work published or broadcast within the past five years.

—  
***[Anand] combined the perspective  
of a business journalists with  
the heart of a sensitive and  
empathetic reporter.***  
—

The award honors the late *Washington Post* medical reporter Victor Cohn, who distinguished himself by the clarity, honesty, and effectiveness of his reporting during a 50-year-career. He was also a co-founder of the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing.

The prize, consisting of a \$3,000 check and a certificate, was presented in Spokane, Wash., on Oct. 21, 2007, at an awards banquet held in conjunction with the NASW Science in Society meeting and the CASW's 45th annual New Horizons in Science Briefing.

Links to Anand's award-winning articles can be found at [www.casw.org/cohn2007.htm](http://www.casw.org/cohn2007.htm). ■

(Source: news release)

### ***TOPP.org lauded as "Best of the Web"***

The Tagging of Pacific Predators ([www.TOPP.org](http://www.TOPP.org)) website was among the top winners in TheScientist.com Laboratory Website and Video Awards. Out of 60 entries, six sites took honors. TOPP.org received the "Best of the Web" from three of the seven Judge's Choice awards, with four lab sites receiving one each of the remaining judges' votes. Multimedia journalist Jane Ellen Stevens is editorial director of the TOPP.org site.

Readers' Choice went to the NyborgLab Online ([www.nyborglab.com](http://www.nyborglab.com)), and editors' choice went to Duke University's Purves Lab ([www.purveslab.net/mainn](http://www.purveslab.net/mainn)).

## **12 THINGS JOURNALISTS CAN DO TO SAVE JOURNALISM**

by Howard Owens

We have decades and decades invested in doing things based on old rules. Now, the rules have changed, and newsrooms need to change as well. We need new attitudes and new cultures. This will happen only if individual journalists put forward the effort to change their minds about what their jobs are and how they do them.

Here are 12 things journalists can do to help recreate journalism for the 21st century.

- **Become a blogger.** By this, I don't necessarily mean "start a blog," but that is never a bad idea. More importantly, become an avid blog reader. Blogs should be a daily routine for every dedicated journalist. They should read every blog related to their beats. They should read blogs about their own interests and hobbies. They should read blogs about their profession. To "get" blogging is to get how things have changed.
- **Become a producer.** Pick up a digital recorder, a point-and-shoot camera, or a video camera and start producing content beyond text. Do this as part of your job, fine, or do it on your personal time. The goal is to understand DIY. Post stuff on YouTube, Flickr, or any number of other UGC sites.
- **Participate.** As you read blogs, leave comments. If your newspaper.com has comments on stories, read the comments and add your own. Become known as somebody who converses on the Internet.
- **Build a website.** It will greatly expand your mind about how the web works if you go a bit beyond just setting up an account on Blogger or WordPress. Learn a little HTML. Better yet, learn some PHP, Cold Fusion, JavaScript, or other web development language. You should own your own domain, anyway.
- **Become web literate.** You should know what Flash is, and how it differs from AJAX. You should know the meaning of things like HTML, RSS, XML, IP, HTTP, and FTP. You should understand at least how people use applications and tools to build websites. You should know the potential and the limitations of each.
- **Use RSS.** You need a RSS reader and lots of RSS feeds to consume. This will help you better grok distributed media.
- **Shop online.** Part of your goal is to become immersed in the digital lifestyle. You will learn stuff about the digital life if you shop on Amazon, eBay, and other

*Howard Owens is director of digital publishing at Gatehouse Media, Inc. His blog ("covering mostly newspapers online") is found at [howardowens.com](http://howardowens.com).*

e-commerce sites. As you do, think about how these sites work and why they're set up as they are.

- **Buy mobile devices.** Get a video iPod. Get a smart phone (an iPhone, Treo, Helio Ocean, or Nokia N-series are all good places to start). Learn about distributed, take-it-with-you-anywhere content. Buy a laptop and tap into some free wi-fi while you're out and about. Learn what digital life is like when you're not shackled to a desktop machine.
- **Become an avid consumer of digital content.** Watch videos on YouTube. Download video and audio podcasts (take them with you on your iPod). Visit the best newspaper sites in the world and watch what they're doing. Turn on your TV less and your computer more.

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*Your job is just where you  
collect your paycheck.  
Your career is what you do.*

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- **Be a learner.** Technology and culture are changing fast. You can't keep up unless you're dedicated to learning. I love this quote from Eric Hoffer because it is so appropriate to what our industry is going through now: "In a time of drastic change, it is the learners who inherit the future. The learned usually find themselves beautifully equipped to live in a world that no longer exists."
- **Talk about what you're learning with your co-workers.** Be a change agent. Get other journalists excited about the new digital communication/media tools.
- **Finally, read Journalism 2.0 (PDF) by Mark Briggs.** You'll learn about the stuff covered above and how it is changing modern journalism. Brigg's book is the best primer on the topic you will find.

Quality journalism, and the news organizations that finance it, needs individual journalists to become personally responsible for their own role in changing newsroom cultures and practices. The smartest publishers with the greatest strategic plans (even if they had bottomless buckets of cash to execute all the best ideas) can't save news organizations without the concerted support of individual journalists.

One last bit of advice: Don't wait for a boss to tell you to become a learner and an explorer. Your job is just where you collect your paycheck. Your career is what you do. Your boss isn't responsible for your career. You are. Solely. Don't wait on others to make changes. Start making changes now for your own benefit. It's great if your employer benefits from your growth, but you will benefit more. ■

## SPOKANE MEETING DELIVERS ADVICE AND ADVENTURE

*Editor's note: The annual Science in Society meeting of the National Association of Science Writers, held Oct. 19-20, in Spokane, Wash., drew approximately 320 attendees from the U.S. and abroad. The following are event photos and excerpts from session reports filed by NASW conference travel fellows. Full text and additional session coverage can be found at [www.nasw.org/meeting/2007/coverage](http://www.nasw.org/meeting/2007/coverage).*

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## TAMING THE DIGITAL OFFICE

by Sharon Levy

The speakers at "Taming the Digital Office" would find it odd, perhaps even perverse, that I'm drafting this story using pen and paper. My work style is clearly very different from that of the computer-savvy members of the panel.

Nevertheless, I picked up many useful tips at the session. For instance, I learned of the existence of hand-held computers which, when combined with a light-weight wireless keyboard, could end the ordeal of lugging a heavy laptop through airports. (My aversion to laptop dragging explains why I resort to ballpoint.)

Bob Finn, a panelist and San Francisco bureau chief for the *International Medical News Group*, often travels for work and described a wealth of resources for those who like to stay plugged in while on the road. Finn uses the Lifestacker website to keep updated on new digital technologies. "If I don't check out Lifestacker every day, I get withdrawal pains," he said.

Finn recommends using a portable software suite, such as Open Office, a substitute for Microsoft Office, that fits on a thumb drive and is available free online. Using public computers in hotels or internet cafes raises some security concerns that Finn addresses with a program called Roboform, which remembers all the user's passwords. This information is protected by a Roboform password, which must use strong encryption. That is, the Roboform access password cannot be one that can be guessed by using a dictionary search, and should incorporate at least eight characters using both upper and lower case letters and numerals. Another useful program for keeping data secure while traveling is CCleaner, also available free online, which eliminates any trace of your activity on a public computer.

Tabitha Powledge, a longtime science and medical journalist and editor, discussed digital ways to organize diverse scraps of information. Programs including InfoSelect, EverNote, and Microsoft OneNote allow the

user to save segments of websites or hand-typed notes by topic—the modern version of the heap of 3x5 index cards Powledge used to take research notes in college. “I’ve encountered young geeks,” she said, “who carry a stack of 3x5 cards and call it a ‘hipster PDA.’ Some think it’s trendy to use paper notebooks. But going back to that when computers are available seems nuts!”

Powledge demonstrated the online program Remember the Milk, which she uses to organize daily tasks both personal and professional. This well-structured digital to-do list avoids overwhelming the user by hiding tasks behind categorized tabs.

Helen Gallagher, founder of Computer Clarity, a software consulting and training business, emphasized that much useful new software is cheap or free. But all these options require some investment of learning time and a willingness to check out an untried program. If you do commit to using a database, make sure the information will be exportable to an alternate program if needed.

The panelists agreed that while both software and hardware continually evolve in useful ways, looking up

new tools and trying them out can be a tremendous drain on a writer’s time. “It’s all too easy,” Powledge said, “to spend hours trying to save five minutes.” In addition, the program that works well for one of your colleagues may not suit you at all. The key is to find the new programs that make your work easier and more efficient without becoming lost in a digital maze.

*Sharon Levy is a freelance writer based in Humboldt County, Calif., who covers conservation and environmental biology. She is a contributing editor at OnEarth and works regularly for BioScience, Audubon, Wildlife Conservation, National Wildlife, and other magazines.*

## MUST CHOOSING TERMS MEAN CHOOSING SIDES?

by Robin Mejia

Choosing terms. It’s something science writers do every day, sometimes with careful thought, sometimes in the last minutes before deadline. This panel challenged writers to use care when choosing terms and constructing analogies to describe contentious science, noting that if writers don’t think through their choices, they may well be letting special-interest groups do it for them.

Erica Austin, the interim director of the Edward R. Murrow School of communication at Washington State University, studies advertising campaigns as well as news coverage. She noted that readers respond both logically and emotionally to every message they receive.

“Patterns are learned early,” she noted. “We don’t have the time to think deeply about every message we receive so we use a lot of short cuts.”

Austin described the messages her mother had learned in the ‘50s about the value of formula feeding infants. “She’s still blaming any problems my children have on the fact that I breast fed them,” she quipped.

Chris Mooney, the author of the *Republican War on Science* urged the audience not to be too literal. “Sometimes scientists want absolute accuracy and they can’t have it,” Mooney said, arguing that metaphors are often the best way explain complex science. However, he cautioned journalists to watch for language that’s being planted for them, noting that special-interest groups use metaphors to their own end.

In his work, Mooney frequently runs into the terms “junk science” and “sound science,” both of which were created by special-interest groups to try to influence what kinds of studies the government could use when making policy decisions. “Neither term accurately captures the truth of trying to use science, which is always imperfect, in regulatory action,” he said.

### Grizzly bear field trip

Prior to the official start of the NASW annual meeting, about 100 attendees took a field trip to visit Washington State University’s grizzly bear research laboratory. Members heard from scientists about how bear hibernation studies are revealing new insights into sleep, metabolism, and cardiac function. One adventurous participant, Anita Wahler of the University of Washington, desired a more intimate connection with the bears and witnesses report tongue touching between Anita and a furry suitor. Discretion (and poor image quality) precludes publication of cell-phone photos of the French kiss. If anyone ever tries to argue that NASW members are not brave, offer them this story.



Prelude to a kiss

He also described an experiment where college students were given news stories that were identical except one used the word "fetus" and the other "baby." Support for an abortion ban was higher after reading stories that used the word baby.

Leah Ceccarelli, a rhetorician at the University of Washington, noted that despite the sophistication some special-interest groups show, many people use metaphors that hurt their causes. For example, warmth is generally considered a good thing and greenhouses are associated with lush foliage and abundance.

"It's taken quite a bit of time to get people to think about global warming and greenhouse gases as a negative thing," she said. "It's hard to overcome definitions that are deeply embedded in the public mind."

Ceccarelli disagreed with Mooney, urging the audience to use scientifically precise language the way scientists do, followed by an explanation of what the phrase actually means.

Charlie Petit then closed out the talk with a somewhat painful depiction of what happens when journalists abdicate their responsibility to make their own choices.

A veteran newspaperman, Petit now runs the Knight Science Journalism tracker. He explained how at the tracker, press releases are posted alongside resulting stories so that readers can see how closely some news coverage follows an institutional line. He also highlighted reporters who clearly started with the same release but did their own reporting and found a different story.

"The point is, whose story is it?" Petit reminded the audience. "You've got to take possession of the story. Do sweat the small stuff. If we thought about it a little harder there might be fewer cases

where this grand framing would take possession of us so easily."

*Robin Meija writes for Wired, Science and Popular Science, and won the 2005 Livingston Award for Young Journalists for her first broadcast project, the CNN documentary "Reasonable Doubt." She lives in Santa Cruz, Calif.*

## SCIENCE WRITING IN ARAB NATIONS

by Kevin Begos

Members of the Arab Science Journalists Association board of directors presented a fascinating view of writing about science in another culture.

Association president Nadia El-Awady noted the diverse cultures that exist in the 22 countries that make up the Arab world, and the contrasts between large cities such as Damascus and Cairo and more rural areas. Overall, the region has a 60 percent literacy rate, with large variations between and even within countries.

According to audience surveys, the top five science topics of interest in the Arab world are: science

miracles in the Koran, computers, space, HIV, and global warming, with very little interest in stem cells and evolution.

Another significant difference is the lack of public information officers in the region, according



Zeinab Ghosn and Nadia El-Awady



New Horizon Attendees visited Palouse Falls for a discussion of ice age geology.



Merry Bruns and Diane McGurgan

to El-Awady, a freelance journalist based in Egypt and former managing science editor of IslamOnline.net.

While there are 184 Arab universities and 126 specialized research centers, she said that Arab science journalists find it extremely difficult to get information on current research, even when the facilities are nearby.

Partly because of that, many science stories that appear in print come from translated wire copy. In 2004, there were 15 popular science magazines published for the Arab market, she said, but all appear irregularly.

One of the successes has been the licensed Arab edition of *PC Magazine*, published since 1994, said Fida Al Jundi, who is based in United Arab Emirates and is vice president of the Arab Science Journalists Association.

Al Jundi writes a column for *PC Magazine*, and said that Internet access in the region varies from 10 percent to 90 percent, by country. He said the magazine has played an important role in guiding consumers who have few other sources of reliable tech information.

Abdelhakeem Mahmoud, a freelance journalist based in Yemen and head of the science and education department at Aden TV, added that there is a growing awareness of environmental issues in the region.

Some scientific issues come to readers in ways that people in America can hardly imagine. Zeinab Ghosn is science editor of the *As-Safir* daily newspaper, and she said that after the 2006 war in Lebanon her paper ran a series of articles about the unusual damage caused by high-tech Israeli weapons.

The talk was organized and moderated by Deborah Blum, professor of journalism, University of Wisconsin-Madison; and NASW's liaison with international science writing groups.

*Kevin Begos is a contributing writer and podcast host for CR Magazine and contributes to Scientific American's "60-Second Science" podcasts. He's won awards from Investigative Reporters and Editors, Associated Press Managing Editors and Washington Monthly for his print reporting and is a contributor to A Field Guide for Science Writers. He is based in Apalachicola, Fla.*



Joann Rodgers, Cris Russell, and Diane McGurgan relax at Terra Blanca winery after an informative afternoon at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.



The Channeled Scablands were created by the biggest flood in the world for which there is geological evidence.

## REINVENTING YOUR FREELANCE SCIENCE WRITING CAREER—THE APPRENTICE VIEW

by Michele Zacks

### *The lead in: balance in freelance?*

The "freelance dilemma" is characterized by a disconnection between idealistic vs. realistic allocation of time, according to session moderator Alan S. Brown. His informal pub survey results prescribe the solution. Instead of playing solitaire, sending useless

e-mails, playing guitar, and cooking—set a goal and construct a plan around it.

No hint of procrastination is evident among these panelists representing three corners of what is greater than a freelance triangle.

### *Corner 1: the "Niche Market Man"*

Steve Miller (freelance—physical sciences). This unpretentious medicinal chemist writes on specialized topics (e.g., superconductors) for trade magazines and writes test questions for middle school curriculum text publishers. He converted a part-time hobby writing for children's magazines into a full-time focus on materials sciences.

His approach? Get laid off, create your niche. Get paid by project time (e.g., \$50-100 is his target), not by the word. Know the rules, and the lingo (e.g., rubric). If not, bluff first, learn it later. Join trade organizations (e.g., National Science Teacher's Association, Association of Educational Publishers) and attend their conferences. Prepare for lean times—do other non-niche work, such as grant editing, as backup. Be aware of potential niche contraction and expansion.



His nod to balance? By limiting topic scope, spend less time looking and more writing/earning. Request his book faves to fill in down time.

### Corner 2: the “Science Refugee”

Rasmi Nemade (BioMedText, Inc.). This molecular/developmental biology Ph.D. with NIH postdoctoral experience went from bench to freelance grant writing. At a time when she was “eating the ground,” her online resume post led to contact by a professor at a nearby university. Ascent followed. Some major possibilities: National Institutes of Health (NIH) R01 grants (principal investigator-driven), Department of Energy (DOE) contracts, NIH Small Business Research Innovation (SBIR) grants, institutional/facility (e.g., hospital) grants.

Her approach? Provide grant writing samples, whether funded or not. Know the grant guidelines. Know the lingo (Request for Proposal, RFP). Seek unexpected apertures (3rd Frontier Initiative).

Her nod to balance? Leave the administrative portions (e.g., biosketches) to them. Get paid by the hour—and itemize it—or get paid in kind, if appealing.

### Corner 3: the “Medical Writing Mint-Maker”

Emma Hitt (Emma Hitt Medical Writing, LLC). After finishing her Ph.D. in molecular biology of cancer, Hitt abandoned the bench, but not her area of expertise. Why waste words and space? She’ll e-mail you her presentation. In short, there’s a wide scope of options, the money is good. Check out the HittList™ and find Hitt’s contact information at [www.emma-sciencewriter.com](http://www.emma-sciencewriter.com).

Her approach? Determine area of expertise, get professional. Set up website, post writing samples (published or, preferably, not). Send mass mailing periodically. Aim at excellence for repeat business.

Her nod to balance? Get advice from customers, not writers. Offer to travel to gain an assignment.

### Wrap up.

Is this invention or reinvention? Either way, these panelists’ messages converge into two key freelance mottos: Anything is negotiable. Anything can be learned.

Whisper that to yourself, at least until you can pay your bills.

*Michele A. Zacks is a member of a virology research laboratory at the University of Texas Medical Branch, a ceramic artist and is trying to be a freelance science writer in Galveston, Texas. Her interests are in things that swim, crawl, fly, and hop and in using visual and audio material in science education.*

## PR STAYS TRUE TO SCIENCE

by Krista West

Science writers are in the business of communicating real, worthwhile, exciting science—working either as science journalists or public information officers. It’s not about the job title; it’s about communicating new scientific discoveries to the intended audience.

This was the overriding message delivered in the session “Switching Gears: Journalism to PR.” Speakers included Glenda Chui, Doug Levy, and Lee Siegel, all career newsroom journalists who made the switch to public relations.

“I don’t feel like this is a bad thing to be doing,” said Chui, who edits *symmetry*, a magazine on particle physics published by Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory and Stanford University Linear Accelerator Center. “It’s not bad if you can believe in it.” Levy and Siegel, who also work for nonprofit organizations whose work excites them, whole-heartedly agreed.

“What’s the most exciting thing about being a journalist?” Levy asked the audience. “Finding out something really cool and telling people about it. We do the same thing in our PR organizations.” Levy, who is the director of

communications for the University of California San Francisco School of Medicine, explained that he uses the same skills in his current position as he used as a journalist—selecting worthwhile science discoveries and translating them for nonscientists. “We’re all still doing science communications,” he said, “but now I can have an impact on what people need to know.”

The speakers explain-



Jia-Rui Chong, of the *Los Angeles Times*, won the Evert Clark/Seth Payne Award; Dan Ferber was honored with the coveted Diane McGurgan Service Award.



Not an empty seat to be found at the ever-popular “Meet the Scientist” luncheon during the CASW New Horizons in Science briefing.

ed their decisions to make the switch from journalism to public relations, offering several reasons, including an overwhelming sense that news outlets across the country are increasingly hesitant to cover good science in their news reports.

For example, Chui's former employer, the *San Jose Mercury News*, recently cut its science section and laid off reporters one by one, a move that Chui said was "demoralizing and dispiriting" to workers. Siegel, who covered science for the Associated Press for more than a decade, said his "editors were getting increasingly allergic to science stories." And, he added, he was frustrated by working with what he described as inexperienced public information officers.

None of the speakers regret the decision to switch career gears. "This job is more fun than any job I've had before," said Siegel. "Putting out a good news release and seeing how you can get it to go all over the world, if it's a good enough story, is fun." ■

*Krista West is a freelance writer living in Fairbanks, Alaska. She specializes in writing science reference books for young adults and has a passion for biology.*

## NEW HORIZONS DELIVERS SCIENCE AND SURPRISES

*by Paul Raeburn*

One of the things I like about organizing New Horizons is that even though I've already interviewed the speakers and read their papers, something—or someone—always surprises me.

Take for example Carolyn Porco, leader of the imaging team for the Cassini mission to Saturn. She was set to deliver a presentation on Saturn and Titan. Instead, she took us on a spectacular tour of the entire Saturnian system. In one especially arresting sequence, she showed a series of photographs taken from the Huygens probe as it parachuted through the atmosphere of Titan. The sequence ended with a shot taken from Titan's surface. The probe had landed intact, and immediately began sending data back to Cassini—the mother ship.

In his Knight Science Journalism Tracker, the tracker himself—Charlie Petit, a veteran space reporter—focused on Porco's slides of Iapetus, another Saturnian moon. "Iapetus is the one that's white on one side, black on the other, and cratered all over—plus belted by a

*Paul Raeburn is program director of CASW's New Horizons in Science briefing.*

truly weird ridge around its equator that stands 10 or even 20 freakin' kilometers high. I was amazed never to have seen it," Charlie wrote.

That was one of a baker's dozen presentations at the 2007 New Horizons. We also heard about cougar conservation in the Pacific Northwest from Rob Wielgus of Washington State University, who made the scientific case for an interesting, non-intuitive finding: Killing cougars by encouraging hunting paradoxically results in more cougars wandering into backyards and attacking humans.

Matt Kaeberlein of the University of Washington discussed the genetics of longevity, meaning, if I got it right, that those of us who were at the session will live forever. Or something like that. Patricia Kuhl, an authority on language development in infants, walked us through her fascinating work with kids, who turn out to be very interesting laboratory animals. And to show us how the brain's visual and auditory areas are wired together, she showed video that made us hear what we knew we couldn't be hearing—because our brains were tricked by the visual cues.

Pat Hunt of Washington State University told us about an experiment gone awry, when her laboratory animals suddenly developed reproductive abnormalities. The mystery was solved months later when she discovered that a detergent used to clean cages had inadvertently damaged the animals' plastic water bottles, releasing an estrogen-like chemical called bisphenol-A.

Hunt became concerned about potential human exposure, because bisphenol-A is used in food and beverage containers. She also became a reluctant advocate and the focus of a massive media campaign from industry representatives who attacked her for overstating the risks. The publicity "changed my life," said Hunt.

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***One of the things I like  
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—always surprises me.***

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Our host was the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, with Washington State University and the University of Washington. I'd like to thank all of the many folks at those institutions for welcoming us and their tireless efforts in the planning process – especially, Bill Cannon, formerly at PNNL and now at Duke; and Greg Koller, Andrea Turner, Becky Ford, and the rest of the team at PNNL.

I look forward to seeing NASW members at this year's meeting. ■

## SCIENCE CABARET ENCORE BRINGS DOWN THE HOUSE

Back by popular demand, the second annual Science Cabaret offered a rousing evening of entertainment to open the NASW/CASW meeting.

The audience entered the ballroom to the strains of solo jazz piano from our own Paul Raeburn—former president, organizer of the CASW New Horizons meeting, and science writer extraordinaire—who started life as a jazz pianist. Yes, Paul got his degree in physics at MIT, and he has had impressive science writing gigs at *Business Week* and the Associated Press, but he also studied musical composition at Boston's Berkelee School of Music.

—  
*...a rousing evening of entertainment...*  
—

Opening the show was singer Heather Mullin a Spokane native now living in Seattle. Accompanied by Paul Raeburn at the keyboard, Heather offered American standards with a scientific theme ("Fly Me to the Moon," "Stormy Weather," "How Deep is the Ocean").

Heather is also a talented actress, and for the second act she was joined by her husband, Seattle playwright Paul Mullin ([www.paulmullin.org](http://www.paulmullin.org)), in a staged reading of Paul's play "The Sequence" about the race to sequence the human genome. Paul played both Francis Collins and Craig Venter; Heather the role of a fictional science writer named Kellie. The script was originally commissioned by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. "The Sequence" is slated to make its world premiere in the fall of 2008 in Pasadena, Calif.

Finally, the audience was treated to songs by Lynda Williams ([www.scientainment.com/pchant.html](http://www.scientainment.com/pchant.html)), who by day teaches physics at Santa Rosa (Calif.) Junior

### NASW American Idol Auditions

Following his performance at Science Cabaret, Paul Raeburn has been named "NASW's Resident Pianist." Now it's your turn to bask in the limelight. If you are an NASW member with singing, musical, comic, mime, or other latent stage talents, Robin Marantz Henig wants to hear from you. The 2008 Science Cabaret is your opportunity to attain your 15 (or less) minutes of fame. Contact Robin at [robinhenig@nasw.org](mailto:robinhenig@nasw.org) if you want to volunteer your talents for the next cabaret, or if you know of other talented performers who deserve to be in on the act.

College and by night becomes "The Physics Chanteuse." She has done her cabaret act in dozens of venues, such as the Swedish Arts and Science Festival, the Cornelia Street Cafe in New York, and the Inspiration of Astronomical Phenomena meeting in Palermo, Italy. Lynda performed original songs, comedy, and repartee on science and technology.

Kudos to Robin Marantz Henig for, once again, assembling a talented line up and assuming emcee chores. Brava! ■



PHOTO COURTESY OF LYNDA WILLIAMS

Lynda Williams has performed for scientists all over the world and been featured in newspapers and on television.

## TAX BREAKS FOR FREELANCE WRITERS

by Julian Block

**Health insurance deductions for self-employed individuals.** Medical expenses are allowable only to the extent that they exceed 7.5 percent of adjusted gross income, the figure on the last line of the first page of the 1040 form. But the tax code permits NASW members and other self-employed persons to deduct 100 percent of what they spend on medical insurance premiums (including qualifying long-term coverage) for themselves and their spouses and dependents.

**First-year expensing.** There are two ways for freelance writers to write off their outlays for purchases of equipment—for instance, computers and file cabinets.

One is the "standard" route—recovering the cost

*Julian Block, an attorney in Larchmont, N.Y., has been cited as "an accomplished writer on taxes" (Wall Street Journal). This article is excerpted from Tax Tips For Writers, Photographers And Artists, available at [www.julianblocktaxexpert.com](http://www.julianblocktaxexpert.com). Copyright 2008 Julian Block. All rights reserved.*

through depreciation deductions over a period of years. Or they can opt for the frequently-overlooked tactic of “expensing” and deduct a specified amount of equipment in the year of purchase.

Suppose a self-employed person’s equipment purchases include \$10,000 for cameras, computers, copiers, tape recorders, and the like. Instead of depreciating them over five years, they can be immediately expensed under Code Section 179. A \$10,000 write-off lowers taxes by \$3,000 for an individual in a top federal and state bracket of 30 percent.

In my experience advising freelancers, few are adversely affected by the ceiling on deduction authorized by Section 179. For 2008, the cap is \$128,000, up from 2007’s \$125,000. The ceiling is indexed, that is, adjusted annually to reflect inflation.

The paperwork for first-year expensing is straightforward. Businesses have to complete Form 4562 (Depreciation and Amortization). Self-employed individuals carry the Form 4562 deduction to, and enter it on, the line for “Depreciation and section 179 expense deduction” on the two-page Schedule C (Profit or Loss From Business), which is where they report receipts, along with equipment costs and other expenses, to arrive at a net profit or loss. Once that has been accomplished, Form 4562 and Schedule C are supposed to accompany Form 1040.

***Profit from paying your kids.*** Do your children help out with some of the chores connected with your business? *Could* they? Then a savvy way to take care of their allowances or spending money—at the expense of the IRS—is to pay them wages for work they do on behalf of the business.

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***Do your children help out  
with some of the chores connected  
with your business? Could they?***

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This is a perfectly legal way to keep income in the family, while shifting some out of your higher bracket and into their lower bracket. A child’s standard deduction enables him or her to sidestep taxes on the first \$5,450 of earnings for 2008, another one of those amounts that are indexed. The IRS allows this kind of business expense only if your children actually render services and you pay them reasonable wages.

Code Section 3121(b)(3)(A) authorizes another break. You sidestep Social Security taxes on the wages you pay your children under the age of 18. To qualify for the exemption, you must operate as a sole proprietorship, meaning the lone owner of a full-time or part-time business that is not formed as a corporation or partnership, or do business as a husband-wife partnership. Put another

way: No exemption for a family business that is incorporated or a partnership with a partner other than a spouse.

Another break for business owners is that write-offs for equipment purchases and wages save more than just income taxes. They also reduce self-employment taxes owed for 2008 on the first \$102,000 of net (receipts minus expenses) earnings. ■

## **SATIRICAL NEWS STORY UNDERScores THE NEED FOR SCIENCE WRITERS**

WASHINGTON, DC—Top physicists from several major American universities appeared before a Congressional committee Monday to request \$50 billion for a science thing that would further U.S. advancement science-wise and broaden human knowing.

The scientists spoke for approximately three hours about the complicated science machine, which is expensive, and large, telling members of the House Committee on Science and Technology that the tubular, gamma-ray-using mechanism is vital in some big way. Yet the high price tag of the thing, which would be built on a 40-square-mile plot of land where the science would ultimately occur, remained a pressing question.

“While expense is something to consider, I think it’s very important that we have this kind of scientific apparatus, because, in the end, I have always said that science is more important than it is unimportant,” Committee chairman Rep. Bart Gordon (D-TN) said. “And it’s essential we stay ahead of China, Japan, and Germany in science. We are ahead in space, with the NASA rockets going to other planets, so we should be ahead in science, too.”

According to the scientists, the electromagnetic science-maker will make atoms move and spin around very quickly, though spectators at the hearing said afterward they could not account for how one could get some atoms to move around faster than other ones if everything is made of atoms anyway. In addition, the scientists said that the device would be several miles in circumference, which puzzled onlookers who had long assumed that atoms were tiny. Despite these apparent inconsistencies, the scientists, in Rep. Gordon’s words, appeared “very smart-sounding” and confident that their big spinner would solve some kind of problem they described.

The highlight of the scientists’ testimony was a series of several colorful diagrams of how the big machine would work. One consisted of colored dots resembling skittles banging into one another. Noting the motion lines behind the circle-ball things, committee members surmised that they were slamming together in a “fast, forceful manner.” Yet some expressed doubts as to whether they justified the \$50 billion price tag.

"These scientists could trim \$10 million if they would just cut out some of the purple and blue spheres," said Rep. Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD), explaining that he understood the need for an abundance of reds and greens. "With all of those molecules and atoms going in every direction, the whole thing looks a bit unorganized, especially for science."

Another diagram presented to lawmakers contained several important squiggly lines, numbers, and letters. Despite not being numbers, the letters were reportedly meant to represent mathematics too. The scientists seemed to believe that correct math was what would help make the science thing go.

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***Frankly, I don't understand why they don't just gather up all the leftover atoms in their test tubes and Bunsen burners.***

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The scientists concluded their presentation by informing the committee that, if constructed correctly, the super science-flyer would be able to answer questions about many, many things, mainly stuff about the universe that sounded like it would be very good to know about.

"Now, I'm no science major, but if I'm being told by a group of people that the protons, neutrons, and electrons need unifying, then I think we owe it to the American people to go in and unify them," Rep. Mark Udall (D-CO) said. "After all, isn't a message of unity what we want to send to our children?"

Still, some committee members were not as convinced, saying that the building of a micro-macro isotope-making science generator should not be a top priority.

"Fifty billion dollars to buy atoms is too much," Rep. Tom Feeney (R-FL) said. "Frankly, I don't understand why they don't just gather up all the leftover atoms in their test tubes and Bunsen burners. I think the scientists should have to use those up before getting new ones."

The scientists remained hopeful that their federal funding will be approved.

"The congressmen appeared receptive to what we were saying, and I think that we made a very convincing case as to why we need a [science gadget] of this magnitude on American soil," said Caltech physicist David Kaminski, who added various other scientific information. "[Some complicated physics-related act] would be possible in our lifetime only through the creation of a [science thing]." ■

"Scientists Ask Congress to Fund \$50 Billion Science Thing," The Onion ([www.theonion.com](http://www.theonion.com)), Sept. 28, 2007.

## DISCOVERY BUYS HOWSTUFFWORKS.COM

Discovery Communications Inc., looking to jump-start a stalled Internet strategy, has acquired the **HowStuffWorks.com** website for \$250 million.

Discovery, owner of cable channels such as Discovery Channel and Animal Planet, said it will use the site as the cornerstone of an effort to bring its vast library of video content to the web.

The deal highlights how established media companies increasingly are expanding on the web through targeted acquisitions instead of building their own sites, a strategy that largely has failed. Discovery's sites, which include online derivatives of its TV networks, have struggled to draw visitors.

"We're way behind in new media and digital," says Chief Executive David Zaslav, who has shaken up Discovery since taking over in January. "I don't think we win just by building vertically."

Acquiring HowStuffWorks gives Discovery the online firepower it has been lacking, Zaslav says. He wants to make the site, which draws about 3.8 million unique U.S. users a month, according to comScore Media Metrix, the foundation of Discovery's digital push. HowStuffWorks says it has 11 million users globally.

Discovery initially plans to marry HowStuffWorks's text content to the network's more than 100,000 hours of documentary and other video footage. Discovery plans to incorporate HowStuffWorks in its future programming plans.



IMAGE COURTESY OF DISCOVERY AND HOWSTUFFWORKS.COM

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***The deal highlights how established media companies increasingly are expanding on the web through targeted acquisitions...***

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Founded in 1998 by Marshall Brain, a university professor in North Carolina, HowStuffWorks built its audience in part by focusing its content on topics that are often the subject of search queries on Google and other search engines. HowStuffWorks has won multiple Webby awards, and was among *TIME* magazine's "25 Websites We Can't Live Without" in 2006 and 2007. ■

(Source: news release and HowStuffWorks website)

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

by Robert Lee Hotz

As many of you know by now, the indispensable Diane McGurgan, the boundless heart and brash sweet soul of NASW, has stepped down as executive director after a generation of tireless service to our profession.

None of us, however, have to say goodbye to Diane just yet. She will be advising our new executive director, Tinsley Davis, as our senior executive consultant during this once-in-a-lifetime transition. Diane will officially retire in June 2009. We first made this announcement, as many of you will know, at our annual business meeting, in Spokane.

Already, I am struggling to sum up a career so intertwined with the growth of our craft and NASW. Diane touched so many lives of our members in so many important ways—sometimes with her deft nurturing understanding, but sometimes, when provoked in our defense, with a fierce protective pride that can sting.

As president of NASW, I have learned the value of delegating a difficult task. So, I have asked five past presidents of NASW—Deborah Blum, Paul Raeburn, Joe Palca, Richard Harris, and Laurie Garrett—to help me muse on Diane's unique contribution to NASW. All told, we encompass almost 15 years of NASW leadership. We worked most closely with her and we each owe the success of our tenure to her capable administration.

National Public Radio science correspondent Richard Harris said it succinctly: "We all know Diane was the glue that held this outfit together for so long. And we're not talking Elmer's—Super Glue is more like it," Harris added, "Diane provided a big dollop of common sense, and thank goodness stopped us from taking ourselves too seriously. What a difference that made!"

To be sure, it is a truism of professional life that none of us is really irreplaceable, but as former president Paul Raeburn notes, no one may ever be able to duplicate the place that Diane created at the heart of our group.

"Diane contributes something to NASW that we will probably never have again," said author Raeburn, who is program director for The Council for The Advancement of Science Writing. "She knows virtually everyone in the organization. That was easier when we had 600 or 700 members (and not too easy then). But as the membership tripled, she has talked to and spent time with new members. She's kept in touch with the veterans.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SIGMA XI

She's helped us get to know one another better.

"Diane's contribution involves much more than simply keeping us connected," Raeburn explained. "She doesn't just know our names. She knows a lot about our lives, our difficulties, our hopes, and our achievements. She knows when to enforce the rules, and when to bend them, a rare quality in an administrator. She finds people jobs. She helps us shrug off our doubts in lean times. She encourages us when things are going well. And she puts a wonderful, warm human face on our organization.

"We live in a faster, busier time now," he added. "None of us could ever begin to fill that role. To say that Diane will be missed doesn't begin to capture her enormous contributions to NASW over the years."

Author and University of Wisconsin professor Deb Blum recalls that Diane was a dependable counselor.

"When I was NASW president," says Blum. "I doubt a week went by without a phone call from me that began, 'Diane! Help!' And she always came through. No matter what the crisis, no matter how difficult a proposal I made, she always figured out a way to solve it. Equally wonderful, she always made me laugh, cheered me up, made the work more fun. And that's true even today—I'm still coming up with new ideas, like a partnership with Arab science writers, and she's still helping make that happen, in style. Her particular style—smart, funny, generous, hardworking, and extraordinarily decent—has helped shape NASW into the terrific community that it represents."

It is Diane's distinctive presence at the center of the swirl of our community that stands out for veteran NPR science correspondent Joe Palca.

"What I have just loved about Diane all these years is her voice and accent," Palca said. "There was always that moment on the first day of the AAAS meeting when you were trying to figure out where the press room was, and then, like a beacon in the dark, you'd hear that broad New York accent letting you know you had reached your goal. And when Diane finally came into sight, she'd look up and give you that great smile that let you know that now that you had arrived, the party could really begin."

Ah, let's linger for a moment on that voice. For more decades than any of us can readily recall, Diane's was the clarion voice of NASW. If you can't easily bring this sound to mind, let Laurie Garrett, former *Newsday* science writer and now senior fellow for global health at The Council on Foreign Relations, help you with a lesson in the language of Long Island, McGurgan-style.

"You want to know what a central Long Island accent sounds like?" Garrett said. "Call Diane, who always refers to me as, 'LAW-aw-aw-ree.' Even by *Newsday* standards Diane's voice is distinctive enough that it seemed redundant to hear her follow up with, 'It's Diane,' the 'a' always delivered with special flour-

Robert Lee Hotz can be reached at [leehotz@earthlink.net](mailto:leehotz@earthlink.net).

ish. If you've never been to Long Island, and have a hard time imagining this, do the following:

Say, "Die."

Stretch the corners of your mouth outwards as far as is comfortable, with the upper and lower lips almost touching, and try to say "a."

Can't do it, can you? So stop thinking of it as an "a," and with the same conformation of your mouth say "ehh." Now make it the dominant syllable and take your mouth to a sharp "n."

"Congratulations: You have just pronounced the name the way Ms. McGurgan would do," Garrett said.

It was Diane's laughter, though, that kept us all on track.

"During my tenure as NASW President," Garrett said, "we shifted the organization from behaving as a club toward a professional association. Every single one of these steps was achieved amid much screaming, whining, complaining, hemming, and hawing from key members of the NASW. Many times I found the outcries so exasperating that I'd threaten to quit.

"LAW-aw-aw-ree," Diane would say, after acknowledging the relative inanity of the offending members, "you gotta roll with the punches, kid. Farm some of the crap out. You got volunteers. You're trying to do so much for the organization, you gotta expect some people aren't gonna like it. You got your kooks and your nuts and your whiners. Big deal."

"There were several moments in my tenure," Garrett recalled, "when I was so fed up with the organization that had anybody but Diane been the executive director I would surely have thrown up my hands and said, 'good riddance.'"

"Diane laughed—in her usual hearty cackle—and started rattling off the numbers of hours per week she thought key individuals devoted to hassling her, key NASW leaders and the collective membership. Her blow-by-blow delivery was so hilarious that I soon had a side ache, and tears rolling down my cheeks. I was laughing so loudly that several people in the newsroom migrated my way, thinking there was some juicy *Newsday* gossip to be heard. One of the science editors asked me what was going on when I hung up. I tried to imitate Diane's delivery and rendition of details but failed completely. Nevertheless, he, too, started laughing and soon the same gossip hounds were circling again.

"Were it not for Diane's marvelous sense of humor I doubt NASW ever would have become the important professional society that it is today. She has the power

to make anything funny—even unintentionally. Gate-crashers trying to barge into the annual awards banquet? No problem: Diane will turn it into vaudeville.

"I have a hard time imagining Diane living out there in the country, doodling around the country club. But I'm sure she's got them in stitches."

Our best wishes, Diane. In this new year, we recall how much of yourself you gave to us in all these years. ■

## NASW ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

by NASW Secretary Peggy Girshman

The membership meeting was convened at 5:41 p.m., on Sat., Oct. 20, 2007, as part of the NASW workshop, in Spokane, Wash.

NASW president Lee Hotz called the meeting to order by saying, "I'm not one to bury the lede." He then announced that Executive Director Diane McGurgan will retire in June 2009 and called it a "sad but wonderful moment." He spoke of Diane as "the heart, the soul, the memory, the sharp tongue, and the all-embracing warm hug of this organization." Following an extended standing ovation for Diane, Lee announced that, effective January 2008, Tinsley Davis will become executive director and Diane will become "senior executive consultant" to NASW, ensuring a smooth transition. He added, "We have all year to think of the right words and gestures to say 'thank you' to Diane."

### Committee reports

**Internet committee:** Vice President Mariette DiChristina announced a new co-chair of the internet committee: Terry Devitt, of the University of Wisconsin. He joins co-chair Kelli Burton. A record 11 travel fellowships allowed students to attend the NASW meeting in Spokane and almost as many travel fellowships went to freelance members, who filed web reports on each workshop sessions.

On the website front, Russ Clemens reported that the freelance market database, named "Word's Worth," debuted in March. The member databases were merged and activated in July. Unfortunately, we need to move our e-mail and list-serve functions (again) as our existing provider will no longer provide e-mail service. We've

*Peggy Girshman is executive editor/consumer publishing of Congressional Quarterly.*



contracted with another company. The change should be seamless and increase reliability of service and storage space. Once the move is complete, we will put out the long-overdue revisions of the listserv policies and procedures.

**Treasurer:** Esteemed treasurer Nancy Shute reported that "we're solvent and on track" to close out 2007 close to the budget previously published in *ScienceWriters* (fall 2007). She made particular mention of the fact that the workshops are subsidized by NASW money (\$75-\$100/person). This type of member support is an important part of the NASW mission.

**Workshop committee:** Tinsley and Mariette thanked the 12 workshop committee members and 19 volunteer session organizers who created the day's 12 sessions, evening science cabaret, plus the all-day grizzly bear field trip. The 2007 meeting drew approximately 320 attendees from the U.S. and abroad.

Big round of applause for Robin Henig, who is now "NASW Impresario," having organized two years of science cabarets to kick off the meeting. A victim of her own success, she promises to outdo herself in 2008. She requests that folks who have hidden talents as singers, musicians, comedians, mimes, etc. contact her for next year's festivities at Stanford.

**Newsletter:** Editor Lynne Friedmann said story ideas for *ScienceWriters* are flowing from the membership, and now she is working concurrently on the next three issues, allowing for more thematic issues.

**Education committee:** Jeff Grabmeier reported that NASW's 2007 program at AAAS was record-breaking, with 38 mentor/mentee matchups. AAAS gave travel stipends to 10 undergrads selected by NASW. The internship fair drew 49 student participants and 15 recruiters representing 16 employers, success we hope to build upon. Jeff encouraged folks to apply for 2008. Rob Irion is now co-chair of the committee. Beginning next year, NASW will begin managing the science writing program directory, currently maintained by Sharon Dunwoody and the University of Wisconsin. In addition, an update to the list of science-writing internship programs will also be undertaken by the committee.

**Freelance committee:** Dan Ferber reported that the major project of the year was the Word's Worth database. There are already 179 entries and folks are encouraged to contribute more. It was announced that Richard Robinson will take over as committee chair.

**International:** Former President Deborah Blum, representative to the World

Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ), discussed efforts to join with science-writing organizations around the world. NASW has partnered with the Arab Science Journalists Association. Together NASW and CASW subsidized five of its board members to attend the Spokane meeting. Meanwhile, Niall Byrne, director of

the WFSJ conference in Melbourne, encouraged NASW members to plan for the 2009 meeting in London.

**Science in Society Awards:** Bob Finn is in need of at least 15 volunteer judges and is seeking a committee co-chair as well. Finn encouraged members to enter this awards competition. There are currently three categories: book, print, and electronic media. Lee Hotz reminded the group that the awards recognize a unique type of reporting and is an important guide star for us all.

**CASW:** Program Director Paul Raeburn noted that 296 registered for the 2007 New Horizons briefing, an impressive number given the remote locale of the meeting. The switch to a four-day NASW/CASW schedule is "working out great," as reflected in the strong attendance numbers.

**New business:** Steve Miller proposed that NASW sponsor workshops at the AAAS meeting (starting in 2009) geared to "the new science writer." This would be coordinated with efforts of the education committee. Steve indicated he's willing to organize a committee. Lee responded that with our new "clarified" relationship with the AAAS perhaps we can find ways to "collaborate cleanly."

The meeting was interrupted by applause 14 times and finally adjourned at 6:17 p.m. ■

## CYBERBEAT

by Russell Clemings

There have been more behind-the-scenes changes at NASW.org. Others are yet to come.

By the time everything is done, probably sometime next spring, we expect to have completely moved all NASW.org services from our longtime provider at the University of Missouri, IRE/NICAR, to a commercially operated "virtual private server" that is completely under our control.

The first step took place one day before Thanksgiving, when handling of all NASW.org e-mail was moved from Mizzou to our new server, which we named server1.sciencewriters.us. Except for a brief outage at the time of the move and a longer one overnight on the following Tuesday, the transition went pretty much as planned.

That's not to say, though, that everything worked



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perfectly for everybody. Some users of NASW.org e-mail aliases discovered that their spam filters were trapping their incoming mail. The solution, in most cases, was simply to add "server1.sciencewriters.us" or its IP address (207.58.166.239) to their whitelists.

Other complained of an increase in spam, including some that appeared to contain viruses. Slowly, with help from our new Internet provider, Servint.net, we've been adding spam filters. But we have to be careful about managing the load on the server, which can easily fluctuated into the danger zone. As a result, it's been a slow process. But by the time you read this, things should be stabilized.

One change that seems to be working well is the use of the spamhaus.org real-time blackhole list, a global list of mail servers that have been compromised by spammers. I'm writing this at 7 p.m. on a Sunday. Already today, our server turned away more than 10,000 pieces of suspected junk mail. And because it does so during the "handshake" before it even receives the message, the resulting increase in server load is minimal.

At this writing, there have been no confirmed reports of false positives (legitimate mail incorrectly identified as spam) from our use of the spamhaus.org list. In any case, there is a safeguard that can protect users from losing important mail.

The way it's set up, the server doesn't simply throw away suspected spam. Instead, it returns the message to the sender with an explanation and directions to the spamhaus.org site. That should give senders ample opportunity to find out about the problem and fix it, rather than thinking their message was ignored.

Incidentally, now is a good time to remind NASW members, especially those with NASW.org aliases, to be careful about reporting spam for mail that they receive via those aliases. Several major Internet providers, such as AOL, Comcast, and Verizon, tend to blame the last server handling a message for any spam reports they receive, regardless of where the spam originated.

That means, for example, that clicking the "mark as spam" button in AOL can result in NASW.org being labeled a spammer. It's not just a theoretical risk. In early December, Comcast users were unable to receive NASW.org e-mail for about 36 hours after that provider decided to label all our mail as spam.

Viruses are another tricky issue to deal with, all NASW.org listservs are set up to strip attachments, which is where viruses usually reside, from any messages they process. They also convert HTML-encoded mail to plain text for the same reason. But to do likewise for mail sent to NASW.org user aliases would be a bad idea, since some attachments are things that people actually want to receive.

There is antivirus software available that can run on the server. But that takes us back to the issue of server

loads. If we have antivirus or spam-filtering software running, and it bogged down the server to the point at which e-mail could not get through promptly or other services fell by the wayside, we would be making the situation worse instead of better.

Nevertheless, at this writing, we have just begun performing simple scans on all incoming e-mail for viruses and other hazards. We'll see how the server responds and take it from there. In any case, our scans may not pick up everything. So it is still important for NASW.org users to have good antivirus scanners (McAfee, Norton, Pc-Cillin, or others) on their own computers as well, just in case.

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***There have been more  
behind-the-scenes  
changes at NASW.org.***

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We'll continue monitoring these issues and trying to come up with solutions. We are also thinking about starting a "server news" listserv and blog on the NASW members' website, to keep members better informed about NASW.org issues without using NASW-announce for that purpose.

In coming months, after we've made sure that the e-mail services are stable and server loads under control, we'll begin moving other NASW.org services to the new server.

This will happen in stages, and we haven't really talked about the details yet. But our emphasis will be on keeping this process as seamless as possible for the average user. One day you'll type in "www.NASW.org" and go to Mizzou. The next, you'll be taken to our new server instead.

Later, we look at installing new software. We're already talking, for example, about how we could use "wiki" software, which allows a group of people to write collaboratively (think of Wikipedia as the model.) One big advantage of operating our own server is that we can make such changes quickly, with fewer people involved and fewer approvals needed. That should speed up the process of introducing new features that need the new software.

The new system has already improved troubleshooting. Every hour, the server analyzes the current mail server log and produces a report that includes details on any error messages it finds in the logs. As a result, tracking down the cause of a missing e-mail can be as easy as searching for the recipient's address in the report.

When it's all finally done, we think the result will be more and better services from NASW.org.

Feel free to send your suggestions to me at cybrarian@NASW.org. I'll forward them to Internet committee co-chairs Kelli Whitlock Burton and Terry Devitt for review. ■

## NEWS FROM AFAR

by James Cornell

Chalk it up to the inexplicable complexities of globalization.

This year's largest gathering of international science journalists may not be at the pan-European ESOF08, in Barcelona, but rather at the good old All-American AAAS, in Boston.

As always, that annual science smorgasbord will offer up a mixed bag of exciting news and boring lectures, stunning demonstrations of new technology and warmed-over reviews of past achievements, surprising political statements, and eye-glazing policy sessions.

Still, the always unpredictable nature of the AAAS—where the highly touted press briefing turns out to be a dud and the unheralded poster presentation produces a sensational news scoop—keeps even jaded reporters returning year after year.

Increasingly, however, those returning reporters are not American.

The number of foreign press registered for the meeting has grown steadily over the past decade—some 290 registered for San Francisco last year—and they are expected to make up more than 20 percent of the total press attendees in Boston. Most significant is the increase in the percentage of “working press” who are foreign.

While Americans still represent the majority of total press registration, at least half of them are “science communicators”—teachers, students, public information officers, or professional association representatives. The economic woes of traditional media in the U.S.—

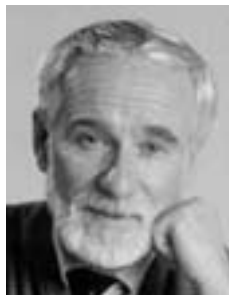


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

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

### Upcoming international meetings

**June 25-27, 2008. 10th PCST (Public Communication of Science and Technology) Conference**, Malmo (Oresund Region), Sweden ([www.vr.se/pcst](http://www.vr.se/pcst))

**July 18-22, 2008. 3rd EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF08)**, Barcelona, Spain ([www.esof2008.org](http://www.esof2008.org))

**Summer 2009. 6th World Conference of Science Journalists**, London, U.K. ([www.scienceinlondon2009.org](http://www.scienceinlondon2009.org))

combined with the move of the NASW's annual meeting to another time and place—means fewer American staff writers now come to the AAAS. By contrast, almost all the foreign registrants are there as reporters.

As a result, in San Francisco, press briefings had a definitely international flavor—with questions from the media posed in a variety of accents. More tellingly, when the subject of a news briefing was purely “American,” such as an analysis of crime rates in major U.S. cities, briefing room attendance was noticeably reduced, sometimes embarrassingly so.

Adding to the foreign press corps this year will be two special groups of “journalism fellows”—six Arab reporters and 10 Germans.

The first group comes to Boston as the result of an unusual “twinning” arrangement between NASW and the fledgling Arab Science Journalism Association (ASJA) organized by the World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ).

The success of the venture encouraged Deborah Blum, NASW's liaison to WFSJ, and Nadia El-Awady, ASJA president, to attempt something similar for the AAAS. With moral support from Earl Lane of AAAS and financial support from publishing giant Elsevier, four of the Arab journalists will come to Boston as AAAS Fellows; and, with help from Boyce Rensberger of MIT, two others will come under the auspices of the Knight Science Journalism Fellowships.

The Arab AAAS fellows include: Dalia Abdelsalam, environmental editor at Al-Ahram Hebdo, Egypt; Mohammed Yahia, science editor at IslamOnline.net, Egypt; Waleed Al-Shobakky, freelance journalist, who writes for, among others, SciDev.net and Aljazeera, Qatar; and, Mahmoud Dwiri, radio journalist for Amman.net, Jordan. The Knight fellows are: Raghida Haddad, executive editor of *Environment and Development* magazine, Lebanon; and, Musa Fadlallah, radio journalist and freelance print journalist, Sudan.

The concept of “foreign journalist fellows” at the AAAS follows the model set by the Robert Bosch Foundation of Stuttgart, Germany. Now in its sixth year, the Bosch Fellows program brings eight to 10 young German science journalists to the meeting, where they are provided “mentoring” by International Science Writers Association (ISWA) members, primarily in the form of daily previews of the meeting, with tips on hot topics, warnings of dull speakers, and directions to the free food and drink.

Over the years, as other foreign reporters became aware of the program, more and more, especially those attending for the first time, have come to sit in on the informal Bosch briefings.

Accordingly, the Arab Fellows have been invited to join with the 2008 Bosch Fellows: Katrin Blawat, SZ Wissen; Dennis Buchmann, freelance (Frankfurter

Rundschau, FAS, and Die Zeit); Ann-Kathrin Eckardt, Muenchner Abendzeitung; Ulrich W. Hanke, Nordkurier; Dr. Pia Heinemann, Die Welt and Berliner Morgenpost; Peter Henrichmann, Suedwest Presse, Ulm; Stefan Kueper, Westdeutsche Zeitung Duesseldorf; Josephina Maier, Badische Zeitung; Christina Merkel, freelance (Hamburger Abendblatt and others); and, Helga Rietz, Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung.

The aforementioned Bosch Foundation is also involved in the other big international meeting this year—Euroscience Open Forum 2008 (ESOF2008)—to be held July 18-22 in Barcelona, Spain. The European equivalent of the AAAS, ESOF is held every other year—previous meetings were in Stockholm and Munich—and, like its model, offers up an eclectic mix of science, technology, and policy. The public communication of science, and the role of science journalists specifically, have been major themes in past ESOF meetings, and that will also be so in Barcelona.

While there is a definite European slant to most presentations, the ESOF organizers have steadily broadened the meeting's scope to include topics of more universal and, they hope, American appeal. Certainly, U.S. journalists (and their home audiences) could benefit from an understanding and appreciation of the breadth and depth of current European research. To that end, ESOF will have an exhibit, session, and reception at the AAAS to encourage U.S. participation. Program information is also at [www.esof2008.org](http://www.esof2008.org).

Realizing that most U.S. editors are reluctant even to send their reporters to Boston let alone Barcelona, the Bosch Foundation is offering a limited number of competitive fellowships for North American reporters who want to cover the meeting. Several NASW members have taken advantage of the program in the past. Details of the application process for 2008 will be available (in English) soon at the Bosch Foundation website [www.bosch-stiftung.de](http://www.bosch-stiftung.de).

Fellow travelers with warm memories of last April's World Congress in Australia will be pleased to learn that two popular science magazines they may have seen there came up as big winners in the country's annual media competitions. *G: The Green Lifestyle Magazine* has been named 2007 Consumer Magazine of the Year only a year after its launch; and its sister publication, *COSMOS*, which treats

science as a hip and fashionable part of contemporary culture, took three other prizes, giving it a total of 22 awards in just three years.

The success of the two magazines is due to the efforts of NASW member Wilson da Silva, co-founder and editor-in-chief of both and also the hosting president of WFSJ in Melbourne. See why the magazines are winners by going to the website of their publisher [www.lunamedia.com.au](http://www.lunamedia.com.au).

In anticipation of increased interest during 2009's International Year of Astronomy, the International Astronomical Union has launched a new journal, "Communicating Astronomy with the Public."

Published in Germany, but written in English, the journal has a generally academic tone and a faint European accent, but its graphics and short features are definitely more jazzy than the standard scholarly tome. Best of all, it is free, and available online at [www.capjournal.org](http://www.capjournal.org).

Worth looking at in the first issue is "An Exploratory Study of Credibility Issues in Astronomy Press Releases." Imagine questioning the credibility of a press release! That must be a European concept. ■

### THREE NASW MEMBERS ELECTED AAAS FELLOWS

NASW members Terry Devitt, Nigel S. Hey, and S. Holly Stocking have been elected fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). All are members of Section Y (General Interest in Science and Engineering). They will receive formal recognition of this honor at a ceremony during the 2008 AAAS annual meeting, in Boston.

**Terry Devitt** is director of research communications for the University of Wisconsin-Madison. For the past 24 years, Devitt has covered the basic and applied sciences at UW-Madison. He also edits and is the project coordinator for *The Why Files*, a popular and critically successful website ([whyfiles.org](http://whyfiles.org)) about science and technology published under the auspices of the UW-Madison Graduate School. Devitt is also an active

freelance science writer and has contributed to such publications as *Astronomy*, *Orion*, the *Milwaukee Journal*, the Los Angeles Times Syndicate, the American Heart Association, the *Bulletin of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute*, and the children's



Terry Devitt



Nigel S. Hey



S. Holly Stocking

PHOTO BY JEFF MALLER/UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

PHOTO COURTESY OF COMMONWEALTH CLUB OF CALIF.

PHOTO COURTESY OF INDIANA URBLOOMINGTON

science magazine *Muse*.

Devitt's awards include the 2001 Science Journalism Award from the AAAS and the Society of Professional Journalists Sigma Delta Chi Award for In-depth Reporting. In 1997, he was the recipient of a Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Gold Award for his work helping to develop The Why Files. In electing him a fellow, AAAS honors Devitt for "vision and leadership of the web magazine The Why Files, to provide the public with accessible information on the science behind today's news."

**Nigel S. Hey** is a media relations professional and writer with a specialty in science and technology and their applications in commerce and defense. A native of England, he sold his first story to the BBC at the age of 11. After college, Hey began his career as a wire service and newspaper reporter. He then joined the Sandia National Laboratories as a science/technology writer and public relations officer (and later a senior administrator), where he remained until his retirement in 2001.

Hey's AAAS fellow election is in recognition of "meritorious service in the communication of science through four decades of sustained accomplishment in public affairs, science writing, editing, and publishing." He is the author of five books, several reference works, and hundreds of articles in publications ranging from *Smithsonian* to the *Sunday Times*. At various times he produced and ran local radio and TV shows, and served as an information officer for the launch of the Project Galileo spacecraft. Hey is a member of the Association of British Science Writers, British Association for the Advancement of Science, and International Association of Science Writers.

**S. Holly Stocking** is an associate professor in the school of journalism, Indiana University-Bloomington. Originally trained in experimental social psychology, her current areas of scholarship concern media constructions of scientific ignorance and uncertainty and media ethics. She helped develop case studies on how journalists cover claims about the uncertainties and unknowns in science. These cases are part of a long-standing interest in the social construction of scientific ignorance and the news media's role in that process. She has co-authored or co-edited four books, including *How Do Journalists Think?*

Before earning her Ph.D. in mass communications at Indiana, Stocking worked as a journalist with the *Los Angeles Times*, *Minneapolis Tribune* and Associated Press, and as coordinator of science writing projects for the Boys Town Center for the Study of Youth Development, in Omaha, Neb.

Stocking is recognized by AAAS "for outstanding teaching in journalism ethics and science writing, and for extensive research to enhance the scientist/journalist interaction and public understanding of science issues." ■

## OUR GANG

by Jeff Grabmeier

**A Good, Healthy Color.** Paul Raeburn is hosting two shows on a new medical channel on XM satellite radio called ReachMD (XM 157). The shows are "Innovations in Medicine"—a science show—and "The Washington Health Report," which deals with such things as health policy, the FDA, and the presidential campaign.



PHOTO BY JO MCNUITY, OHIO STATE

Other NASW members working with Paul at ReachMD are **Rebecca Perl** (rperl@mindspring.com), a longtime NPR reporter who is producing the two shows, and **Tracy Hampton** of *JAMA* (tracy.hampton@jama-archives.org), who is writing a weekly news show. (FYI—Both were hired by Paul through the NASW jobs list.) Contact Paul at paulraeburn@nasw.org for free online access to the channel.

**Red-Hot Career.** Peter Brown, former editor in chief at *Natural History* magazine, has a new job. Peter is now on the board of editors at *Scientific American* magazine. Peter will be editing articles and dealing directly with the authors of feature articles. He is also taking the lead on organizing the magazine's single-topic issue for next September. Peter's new coordinates are pbrown@sciam.com.

**A True-Blue Freelancer.** Georgia-based freelancer **Kelli Miler Stacy** passed the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences ([www.bels.org](http://www.bels.org)) board exam in October. The BELS is designed to evaluate the proficiency of manuscript editors in the life sciences and to award credentials similar to those obtainable in other professions. Kelli works part time for A.D.A.M., Inc., a provider of online consumer health information. She is the managing editor of their award-winning *Health Illustrated Encyclopedia*, featured on MedlinePlus and the *New York Times* websites. Congratulate Kelli at kelli@newsciencemedia.com

**Tickled Pink with Her New Job.** The Idaho National Laboratory, in Idaho Falls, has hired **Nicole Stricker** to fill a newly created communications position, where she will focus on national media relations and writing about laboratory research. Nicole comes to the lab from *The Salt Lake Tribune*, where she had been education reporter. Chat with Nicole at nstricker@nasw.org.

**Blue-Ribbon Winner.** Freelancer **Maura Phillips Mackowski**, of Gilbert, Ariz., received an honorable

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

mention for the American Astronautical Society's Eugene M. Emme Astronautical Literature Award. Maura was honored for her book *Testing the Limits: Aviation Medicine and the Origins of Manned Space Flight* (Texas A&M University Press, 2006). The book is part of the Centennial of Flight Series published by Texas A&M University Press. Send Maura a message at [maura\\_mackowski@hotmail.com](mailto:maura_mackowski@hotmail.com).

**Awarded the Gold Medal.** Another book-award winner is **Ann Parker**, a retired science writer for Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, in Livermore, Calif. Ann took home the Colorado Book Award for Popular Fiction for her novel *Iron Ties*, which is the latest in her Silver Rush historical mystery series set in the silver-rush boom town of Leadville, Colo. The first in the series, *Silver Lies*, also won several literary awards, including the Colorado Gold Award and the Willa Literary Award for Best Historical Fiction. The series is published by Poisoned Pen Press. Talk fiction with Ann at [annparker@annparker.net](mailto:annparker@annparker.net).

**Roll Out the Red Carpet.** Freelancer **Lara Pullen**, of Oak Park, Ill., received good news recently about her website **HealingThresholds.com**, which is dedicated to translating the science of autism therapies into language that parents can use. About.com recently reviewed the website and gave it 4.5 stars out of 5. (See [autism.about.com/od/autismproductsguide/gr/healthreshold.htm](http://autism.about.com/od/autismproductsguide/gr/healthreshold.htm).) Lara said the site, now about a year old, gets about 1,000 visitors per day. About 2,500 people have signed up for the free autism therapy eBrief. Learn more from Lara at [lara@environmentalhealthconsulting.com](mailto:lara@environmentalhealthconsulting.com).

**Give Him A Gold Star.** NASW member and Foothill College astronomy instructor **Andrew Fraknoi** has been named the 2007 California Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). Fraknoi was selected from more than 300 top professors in the United States. The 40 national and state winners of the U.S. Professors of the Year Award were honored at a luncheon and evening reception in Washington, D.C. Andrew is at [fraknoi@fhda.edu](mailto:fraknoi@fhda.edu).

**Given the Green Light.** **Hannah Hoag**, a freelance writer from Montreal, has been elected to the board of the Canadian Science Writers' Association. CSWA will hold its next conference in Whitehorse, Yukon (May 2008). NASW members—especially those in Alaska—are invited to attend. Get the details from Hannah at [hannah.hoag@gmail.com](mailto:hannah.hoag@gmail.com).

**Laugh Until You're Blue.** Every writer needs a break from writing, which is the thought behind the new website "Writer's Catablog." Led by the jaded clip-art dog "Scribbles," the site is the brainchild of NASW freelancer **Star Lawrence**, of Chandler, Ariz., and writer/designer **Nancy McKeithen**. The site ([\[catablog.com\]\(http://catablog.com\)\) includes plenty of writing-related humor, including coffee mugs and bumper stickers for sale. Star is at \[JKelLaw@aol.com\]\(mailto:JKelLaw@aol.com\).](http://writers</a></p>
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**Taking a Golden Opportunity.** **Paul Muhlrud**, of Tucson, has turned in his freelancer's hat and home office for button-down shirts, a commute, and a job with the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Paul is a research program coordinator at MDA's national headquarters and part of a team that oversees MDA's many research programs, including its \$40 million per year portfolio of research grants seeking cures and treatments for 40 different neuromuscular diseases. Paul says he still gets to use his science communications skills for sharing stories with scientists, donors, families, and policy makers. Contact Paul at [pmuhlrud@mdausa.org](mailto:pmuhlrud@mdausa.org).

**White-Hot Career Move.** Also giving up freelancing is **Mary Beckman**, who is moving from Idaho to Richland, Wash. to become a senior science writer at the Pacific Northwest National Lab. Mary reports she will no longer be wearing slippers to work! Send your regards to Mary at [mbeckman@nasw.org](mailto:mbeckman@nasw.org).

**Taking Home the Silver.** Buffalo-area freelancer **Jennifer Wettlaufer** took a second place prize in the National Federation of Press Women's 2007 At-Large Communications Contest. Jennifer won in the category "Special Articles/Science, Ecology, Environment, Energy" for two articles she wrote for *Buffalo Spree* magazine. The judges said Jennifer did "a nice job explaining a potentially confusing topic" and used "very good quotes." Congratulate Jennifer at [buffalolink@earthlink.net](mailto:buffalolink@earthlink.net).

**The Ocean Blue.** AAAS is the latest organization to recognize **Kenneth Weiss** ([ken.weiss@latimes.com](mailto:ken.weiss@latimes.com)) and **Usha Lee McFarling** ([usha.mcfarling@gmail.com](mailto:usha.mcfarling@gmail.com)) for their five-part series in the *Los Angeles Times* series titled "Altered Oceans." Kenneth and Usha received the organization's Science Journalism Award in the Large Newspaper category. They will receive \$3,000 and a plaque at the 2008 AAAS Annual Meeting in Boston, in February. The pair previously picked up a Pulitzer Prize, NASW Science in Society Award (see page 1), and a truckload of other honors for the series.

**Color Us Scared.** If "Our Gang" had an "odd news" section, this item would fit perfectly. Long-timer NASWer **Rick Borchelt** was tapped by National Geographic's "Pop Omnivore" blog to offer advice about what to do if a cobra is loose in your train compartment. It would take too long to explain; just visit [http://ngm.typepad.com/pop\\_omnivore/2007/10/snakes-on-a-tra.html](http://ngm.typepad.com/pop_omnivore/2007/10/snakes-on-a-tra.html) for the full scoop. In case you're wondering how Rick came to be an expert on dealing with snakes, there is a good answer: he is a former Missouri Junior Rattlesnake Jamboree Champion! Ask him all about it at [rborche1@jhu.edu](mailto:rborche1@jhu.edu). ■

## IN MEMORIAM

### Jerry E. Bishop

Legendary Wall Street Journal reporter  
and CASW Leader



PHOTO BY LYNNE FRIEDMANN

Jerry E. Bishop, a giant in the field of science journalism, who covered nearly every major story from the Space Age to the Genomic Age during a 42-year career at the *Wall Street Journal*, died Oct. 26, after a long battle with lung cancer. He was 76. He was an NASW member for 45 years, a former editor of

*ScienceWriters*, and past president of the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing.

For his legions of readers, Bishop wrote with uncommon clarity and insight about topics ranging from superconductors to heart disease. A page-one story published in 1966 included a spot-on prediction of what became the Internet—some three decades before the web transformed communications.

In early 1962, he wrote an article explaining Watson and Crick's discovery of the structure of DNA, but editors uncertain of what to make of it held the story. Months later, when the scientists won the Nobel Prize, the story was rushed into print the next day, providing readers with such depth and detail that it seemed Bishop had been eavesdropping on the Nobel jurists' deliberations.

Another scoop was his report in 1992 that bacteria, not stomach acid, caused most ulcers. In the early 1980s, he was among the first journalists to report on a mysterious illness affecting gay men. But Bishop struggled initially to get his stories about what mushroomed into the AIDS epidemic into the paper because of editors' squeamishness at the time about how to describe the sexually transmitted disease to readers. Advances in Alzheimer's and cancer and stories about gravity, global warming, and cold fusion were among his myriad subjects. He also wrote about the quest for a quieter vacuum cleaner and the role that pheromones play in romance. His coverage was often recognized with awards.

Jerry Bishop was born in Dalhart, Tex., on March 29, 1931 and began his newspaper career as a delivery boy for the *Dalhart Weekly*, a small daily published by his father. He received a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Texas, Austin, in 1952. While still in college, he edited a suburban weekly. Bishop joined the *Wall Street Journal* in 1955 as a copy-reader in the Dallas bureau and was soon promoted to reporter. In 1957, he was transferred to New York as a

rewrite man and a year later was assigned to report on medical research. He moved to the Washington, D.C. bureau in 1959 for a year before returning to New York office for the rest of his career.

In the newsroom, Bishop was a teacher, mentor, and friend. He was unfailingly generous with his time and advice, giving counsel to colleagues whose parents or siblings had been diagnosed with cancer, or patiently helping and re-helping younger reporters define such terms as "monoclonal antibodies." And he was legendary for never giving up his Texas roots. He reported to work each morning wearing a cowboy hat over his hallmark ponytail, a western shirt adorned with a bolo tie, a classic belt buckle and, of course, cowboy boots. To outsiders who didn't know him, this attire invariably inspired a double-take when he introduced himself as a *Wall Street Journal* reporter.

His quiet, unassuming smile belied a healthy appetite for practical jokes. He sometimes stretched his role as mentor for comic effect. He assigned one new reporter to write a story on the last candlewick farm in New Jersey. Another cub reporter spent days trying to pin down a story on what Bishop had assured him was the quarterly rotation of the top of the Empire State Building to counterbalance the effects of prevailing winds. For that ruse Bishop even doctored a well-known diagram of the building in a book consulted by the reporter.

Beyond the newsroom, Bishop worked tirelessly to advance the profession of science journalism. He was a member of the CASW board for more than two decades and served as CASW president from 1997 to 2006. During a New Horizons in Science Briefing session, nearly two decades ago, researchers were describing a then-new device called a defibrillator that senses irregular heartbeats and delivers a jolt to put the heart back in rhythm. Several reporters in the audience asked technical questions about the device and then Bishop raised his hand. "When the device fires that jolt," he asked, "what does it feel like?"

That was quintessential Jerry Bishop, asking the exact question that connected the world of science with the world of his readers.

"Jerry was a hero to a generation of *Journal* staffers," said Paul Steiger, editor-at-large and former managing editor of the *Journal*. "His own stuff was absolutely wonderful, and he always took time to help colleagues get the science right, and usually in a way that made them feel smart rather than stupid. A great journalist and a great person."

(Source: CASW and Wall Street Journal obituary by Ron Winslow)

**William T. Golden***Financier and Key Science Adviser*

William T. Golden, an investment banker, a philanthropist, and a main architect of American science policy in the 20th century, died on Oct. 7 in Manhattan. He was 97.

For more than 50 years, Golden was at the nexus of science and society as a man who knew almost everybody in science and government.

His willingness to “buy the first tank of gas,” as he put it, for worthy projects led him to serve as a trustee or officer or board member of nearly 100 organizations, universities, and government agencies.

Golden was an assistant to the Atomic Energy Commission in 1950 when he was tapped to consult with President Harry S. Truman about the development of science and technology. After the outbreak of the Korean War and amid fears of a confrontation with the Soviet Union, Truman was under pressure to reactivate the Office of Scientific Research and Development, which spearheaded the atomic bomb program in World War II.

Golden embarked on a cross-country tour to interview military, industrial, and scientific leaders. He concluded that a new research office would only interfere with the work being done by agencies like the Atomic Energy Commission, the Office of Naval Research, and the National Institutes of Health. The challenge was to coordinate all this activity.

“I got the idea that there should be a science adviser to the president,” Mr. Golden recalled. “Truman approved the plan immediately.”

In the Truman administration, Golden and others guided the formation of the National Science Foundation, established by an act of Congress to provide grants for basic research.

John Gibbons, who was science adviser to President Bill Clinton, recently said, “Without people like [Golden], there would be no infrastructure, no research.”

William T. Golden was born on Oct. 25, 1909, in Manhattan. He wanted to be a physicist but found that he disliked mathematics. Instead, he studied English and biology at the University of Pennsylvania. After a year at the Harvard Business School, he headed to Wall Street in 1931 to work for Harold Linder, an investment and a management consultant he met at Harvard.

“The idea was to make a lot of money on Wall Street and then do interesting things,” Golden said.

In the '50s, with his financial career flourishing, Golden plunged into his second life, as a philanthropist.

Over the years, he continued to emphasize the importance of science advice in public affairs. In 1991, under the auspices of the Carnegie Commission on Science, Technology and Government, of which he was chairman with Nobel laureate Joshua Lederberg, Golden initiated a series of twice-yearly meetings of science advis-

ers or ministers from the G7 nations. The gatherings, the most recent of which was in June in Bled, Slovenia, have been unpublicized and closed to all but the advisers and Golden, who always left after the first dinner.

Golden also waged a 30-year campaign to install a science adviser in the State Department. The first person in the post was Norman P. Neureiter, appointed in 2000.

Golden published five books and many articles on science policy. As biology replaced physics as the glamour field in science, he enrolled in classes at Columbia University and received a master's in biological sciences in 1979, at age 70.

In an interview in 2001, Mr. Golden characterized his life as one of curiosity, self-indulgence, and patriotism.

“I'm fortunate that I can do the things I like to do,” he said. “They have to be interesting. Hopefully, they are useful.”

(Source: New York Times obituary)

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SCIENCEWRITERS HAS LEARNED OF THE DEATHS  
OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

**Marjorie Carmosin**, of Jenkintown, Penn., died July 25, 2005. An NASW member since 1960, she had retired from the public relations office of Hahnemann Medical College and Hospital, in Philadelphia.

**Marge Davenport**, of King City, Ore., died Jan. 1, 2007. She was 89 and had been an NASW member since 1973. She was a freelance writer and editor with Paddlewheel Press, of Portland. She studied journalism at Washington State University and the University of Washington. From 1959 to 1980 she worked for the Oregon Journal as a medical and science writer. After retiring, she wrote several books and published *The Oregon Scientist*.

**Alfred Roller**, died Jan. 3, 2007. An NASW member since 1962, he was editor/publisher of Professional Education Publications in Chapel Hill, N.C.

**Ralph Brave**, Baltimore-based freelance writer and committed activist, died on Sept. 1, 2007, three weeks after being diagnosed with advanced-stage lung cancer. He was 54 and had been an NASW member since 2002. In the mid-1990s, Brave began researching and writing about human biotechnology and published extensively on the politics of genomics and the “new eugenics” in such publications as *The Nation*, *Washington Post*, *Salon*, *Alternet*, *Sacramento News & Review*, and *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

**Wayne Pennington** (freelance) of Raleigh, N.C. An NASW member since 1960. ■

## REGIONAL GROUPS

by Suzanne Clancy

### New England

Getting a jump on the holiday party season, the New England Science Writers group held its traditional celebration Nov. 28 at Johnny D's Restaurant and Music Club, in Somerville. Among the 50 or so who attended were local science journalists, students from the Boston University science writing program, spouses, and friends. The group's annual drink-eat-schmoozathon is timed to coincide with the Knight Science Journalism Fellowship program's boot camp, which brings a number of science writers to MIT in late November. NESW will be doing it again next year, so if you're in town, they ask that you get in touch and drop by.

New England Science Writers and the Neiman Foundation sponsored a symposium on how global public health issues might produce stories that engage editors and readers. Held at the Neiman headquarters at Harvard on Dec. 5, the seminar featured four panelists: David Kohn of *The Baltimore Sun*, Harro Albrecht, a medical writer and editor at the German newsweekly *Die Zeit*, author Phil Hilts of the science journalism faculty at Boston University, and *TIME* magazine contributor Christine Gorman. Discussions reinforced a basic theme: interest in global health is on the upswing. Publishing opportunities were said to be especially strong in web-based media.

### Chicago

On November 2, the Chicago area science writers celebrated the 50th anniversary of the space age with a lunch at Northwestern University. Speaker was Abigail Foerstner, who teaches science writing at Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism. Foerstner is the author of *James Van Allen: The First Eight Billion Miles*, a biography of famed space scientist James Van Allen. Van Allen was an Iowa boy who became a major scientific figure while working at the University of Iowa.

Foerstner explained how Van Allen's career was a key part of the early history of space exploration. He designed experiments for early missions to Venus and Mars that determined these planets do not have magnetic fields. The Pioneer 10 and 11 voyages to the far

*Suzanne Clancy is a science communications consultant and freelance journalist in San Diego, Calif. Send information about regional meetings and events to [sclancyphd@yahoo.com](mailto:sclancyphd@yahoo.com).*



PHOTO BY MARC LIEBERMAN

reaches of the solar system carried his instruments. Van Allen's name is connected with a belt of radiation, held in place by Earth's magnetic field, discovered in 1958 by equipment he placed on America's first satellite.

She talked about her interviews with Van Allen, researching his papers and diaries, and the multiple drafts of the book that explained the scientific work that Van Allen undertook as well as his interest in his students.

### Washington, DC

In September, DCSWA hosted a trivia night, with the tagline "are you smarter than a duck?" Eight teams of four turned out for three fast-paced rounds of science and general trivia. Beer was drunk; T-shirts awarded.

A group of 20 intrepid DCSWAns trekked to the Montgomery County (Maryland) waste-to-electricity facility early on a Saturday morning in October. The facility, which won the 2000 Waste-to-Energy Facility of the Year Award—transforms trash, making relatively clean electricity via turbine. Trash arrives from the sorting station on rail and gets dumped into a big trough, where a giant claw grabs it and hoists it into the incinerators. The claw is so nimble—and operators so proficient—a beach ball can be manipulated without popping. The facility reduces the volume of junk dumped into the ground by about 70 percent and reduces the weight of it by 90 percent.

In November, DCSWA hosted a Café Scientifique featuring ecologist Rolf Peterson of Michigan Technological University. For 38 years, Rolf has been studying wolves and moose on Isle Royale, a sliver in Lake Superior near the Canadian shore. Because it is a national park, the animals on the island are protected, making it an ideal locale for wolf and moose watching. The wolves arrived in 1950 by traversing an ice bridge, and in 1958 Michigan Tech researchers began tracking them. By living on the island in the summer and routinely flying over it during the winter, Peterson and his colleagues have kept a close eye on the populations of predator and prey.

There are currently about 400 moose, hunted by 21 wolves in three packs. The wolves eat most of the moose calves born each year, but the big animals will continue to survive, says Peterson. He's less optimistic about the wolves. Their numbers have been declining and now might be too low to support long-term survival. With warmer weather, the moose have been weakened by another, much smaller foe—the moose tick. These little blood suckers, which do better in warmer weather, weaken moose. In 2001, there were more than 1,000 moose on the island, but tick infestation has helped drop those numbers. Five of the past six summers have been the hottest in the 50 years of the project, says Peterson. More information on this work can be found online at [www.isleroyalewolf.org](http://www.isleroyalewolf.org).



## San Diego

In late September, SANDSWA held a book exchange that provided members an opportunity to clear their home libraries of unwanted science-related/reference books. Members wrote their name on post-it notes that they then affixed to the books contributed. That way, if someone had questions they could find that person and learn more about a particular book before taking it home. In addition to members helping themselves to new titles, discussion of the books facilitated socializing and networking. The idea was the brain child of Cathy Yarbrough, who arranged with the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center to provide a room for the event. There was also a brief business meeting during which SANDSWA appointed its first slate of officers, who will lead the group the coming year. The move is an effort to give more structure to SANDSWA, its programming efforts, and provide a leadership path for the group's continuity. ■

## LETTERS

NASW has long been a club where journalists rubbed shoulders with public relations people, usually comfortably. But in the last issue of *ScienceWriters* and at the NASW annual meeting in Spokane, it struck me that the rubbing is blurring the once-bright line between our two crafts. In both venues Jane Stevens presented her Great Turtle Race website as if it were journalism. It was nothing of the kind, at least as I understand journalism. It came across as more like the product of the PIO segment of NASW's membership. I wish I didn't feel a need to point out key differences to NASW members.

Journalism, of course, is supposed to have no financial or ideological ties to the content it presents to the public. As journalists phrased it in the old days, we give the news "without fear or favor." In her talk and article, Stevens presented her turtle race website as a new form of explanatory journalism. Leaving aside the question of how much it explains, I want to argue that it should not be considered journalism. As Stevens explained, the site is a collaboration of environmentalist advocacy groups and what she called a "business model" that took in funds from corporations. In other words, she was not acting independently of her collaborators.

The site's cause is the protection of migratory sea turtles. No doubt we all personally favor that. And the online turtle race, which tracks radio-tagged sea turtles, is a marvelous way to educate the public. It's entertainment, even education. But journalism it ain't. Just imagine what we would call it if a similar website, developed with the collaboration of, say, Exxon-Mobil, were to teach the public about oil geology and the marvel of solar energy captured in prehistoric times and stored

underground. What if Monsanto collaborated on a website that explained plant physiology and how it can be modified by spraying the plant with Monsanto's products?

Stevens's article in *ScienceWriters* raises another challenge to the definition of journalism. In it, she writes, "Scientific institutions have an opportunity to hire science journalists to build communities..." Are journalists for hire by those they cover? Wouldn't such a hire instantly convert a journalist into a public relations person?

*Boyce Rensberger, Director  
MIT Knight Science Journalism Program*

Jane Ellen Stevens' article about her multimedia package called *The Great Turtle Race* (SW, fall 2007) was not only a pleasure to read but also a welcome salvo in the lively discussion about what will constitute science journalism in the 21st century. Professors like me are keenly interested in this back and forth, as we occasionally get first crack at the next generation of science journalists and we want to provide training that fits the needs of both our students and the workforce.

So are interactive, "community-building" packages like *The Great Turtle Race* the future of science journalism? Opinions will vary, I'm sure. But if we take seriously the reasons audiences pay attention to journalism, this kind of reporting does seem to meet one need that journalists have always valued: explanation.

When you ask audiences why they ingest news, they give you two primary answers: to keep up with what is going on in the world around them (surveillance) and to try to understand issues well enough to form opinions and to guide actions. Journalists dedicate themselves to serving both needs, and science journalists might be considered explainers par excellence. It is no accident that science (writ large) stories routinely capture the Pulitzer Prize for Explanatory Reporting.

The kind of multimedia packaging produced by Jane and her group seems to take explanation to a whole new level. I suspect that allowing members of the audience to follow their favorite leatherback turtles around the ocean, in real time, creates intense motivation to learn about the risky lives of these animals. And if a

### *ScienceWriters welcomes letters to the editor*

A letter must include a daytime telephone number and e-mail address. Letters may be edited. Letters submitted may be used in print or digital form by NASW. Send to Editor, *ScienceWriters*, P.O. Box 1725 Solana Beach, CA 92075, fax 858-793-1144, or e-mail [lfriedmann@nasw.org](mailto:lfriedmann@nasw.org).

journalist can match a need to learn with good explanatory content, she may enable audiences to build a much richer understanding of the topic at hand.

So is this journalism? In the surveillance sense, perhaps not. But does this kind of reporting offer a better way for today's science writers to meet the explanatory needs of their audiences? I would love to hear from the science-writing community on this matter.

*Sharon Dunwoody, Professor  
School of Journalism and Mass Communication  
University of Wisconsin-Madison*

I know that the freelance ranks of NASW and other organizations have been swelling in recent years, and I myself am one of those people freelancing after many years as a staffer. Still, I was shocked to read in the recent *ScienceWriters* newsletter that only 85 of NASW's 2,891 members are traditional staff journalists, as Lee Hotz wrote in his president's column (*SW*, fall 2007). That's less than three percent!

There seems to be a discrepancy between Lee's figures and Cris Russell's article. Cris wrote that more than 40 percent of NASW members are now freelance writers, compared to only about 4 percent who are on staff at newspapers; 2 percent at popular magazines; and 1 percent in radio and television. If you total those figures up, you get seven percent of the membership who are staffers, more than double the figure cited by Lee.

I'm not writing to quibble over your math. I would be very interested in which numbers are correct, but my larger concern is that it appears that the majority of NASW members are not journalists at all—not even if you assume that all of those freelances are doing journalism rather than other types of science writing. When did journalists become a minority at NASW? And isn't that just as worrisome as the outsourcing of staff jobs?

*Dawn Stover  
White Salmon, Wash.*

**Lee Hotz's reply:** *We all find the dwindling number of science journalists shocking, especially since the numbers have dwindled dramatically even as the science writing profession as a whole—at least as measured by our membership stats—is thriving. As for the actual numbers of practicing science journalists, it is difficult to be precise and any difference between how Cris and I count them is in the end hairsplitting. Many of our freelancers would be properly insulted if they were not considered journalists, even though the character of their assignments might vary widely. As a purist, I drew the circle very narrowly because I think that counting folks working at popular magazines is misleading because many*

*of them are engaged in what many might consider purely explanatory work, rather than the sort of probing work that requires First Amendment protection.* ■

## NOTICES FROM DIANE

*By Diane McGurgan*

### **Authors Coalition**

A sincere thank you to members who completed their Author Coalition surveys last year. Through your efforts, NASW topped the 60 percent response rate required for funding eligibility. As a result, NASW received a total of \$114,857.75 in 2007. A reminder that compliance does not carry over year to year, so a new survey must be completed annually. Your fulfillment of this requirement will continue to yield tremendous benefits to NASW and the field of science writing. We can't do it without you. Survey deadline: Jan. 31, 2008.



PHOTO BY ANDREW SKOLNICK

### **Dues, Roster, Database**

Jan. 31 will be the new deadline for dues renewal. This can be done online ([nasw.org/NASW/renewals.htm](http://nasw.org/NASW/renewals.htm)). Reminder: If paying by VISA or Mastercard, the credit card number, expiration date, and three digit-security code are needed. If you choose the PayPal option, make sure to include your billing address.

### **Your Database Responsibility**

An important reminder that as part of the NASW website redesign members have online access to their contact information and—more importantly—members now have the responsibility for making their own database updates. So if you have an address, phone, or e-mail change, it's up to you to make the database correction. Given our growing membership, staff can no longer do this for you.

### **Award Deadlines**

The NASW Science in Society Award deadline: Feb. 1, 2008.

The CASW Victor Cohn Prize in Medical Science Reporting deadline: July 31, 2008.

Both awards will be presented at the NASW/CASW banquet, Oct. 21, 2008, in Stanford, Calif. ■

## BOOKS BY AND FOR MEMBERS

By Ruth Winter

### **Science 101: Forensics** by Edward Ricciuti (NASW), published by Smithsonian/Collins.

Forensics deals with subjects as varied as the timing of a rain-fall and the trajectory of a bullet. Its practitioners use tools as uncomplicated as a simple envelope to hold a fragment of evidence to a complicated scanning electron microscope to probe the molecular structure of a piece of evidence. In his history of forensics, Edward Ricciuti, a Connecticut freelance, describes what is believed to be its first use. A 13th-century Chinese physician was asked to solve the murder of a man slashed to death by a sickle. He asked all the farmers to present their sickles. One of the implements—and only one—attracted a horde of flies. The investigator deduced that the insects were drawn by the faint scent of blood and tissue that still clung to the sickle blade. Confronted with the evidence, the sickle's owner confessed to the murder. Ricciuti, of course, also describes cutting-edge forensics being used to solve crimes today. And if you want to know who killed King Tut, read Ricciuti's book about new evidence recently uncovered. Ricciuti can be reached at ed.ricciuti@spcglobal or 860-663-1804. Press representative is Gretchen Crary at Gretchen.crary@harpercollins.com or 212-207-7582.



### **Science for Sale: The Perils, Rewards, and Delusions of Campus Capitalism** by Daniel Greenberg (NASW), published by University of Chicago Press.

In recent years, the news media have been awash in stories about increasingly close ties between college campuses and multimillion-dollar corporations. Our nation's universities, the story goes, reap enormous windfalls patenting products of scientific research that have been primarily funded by taxpayers. Meanwhile, hoping for new streams of revenue from their innovations, the same universities are allowing their research—and their very principles—to become compromised by quests for profit. "But is that really the case?" Greenberg questions. "Is



money really hopelessly corrupting science?" A Washington, D.C. freelance, his aim is to sort out the conflicting reports about commercialization of university research and various close contacts between academe and industry. His conclusion: There are many unwholesome consequences of closer ties between universities and industry. These include conflicts of interest, diversion of attention and resources to commercial work (to the detriment of education and science), secrecy and loss of collegiality, and needless risks to volunteers in clinical trials. Universities have been slow to recognize the dangers, but, at last, many are taking steps to assert academic integrity. But there's still a long way to go—and there are reasons to be concerned about backsliding. Greenberg reveals that campus capitalism is more complicated—and less profitable—than media reports would suggest. But just because the threat is overhyped, doesn't mean there's no danger. "From research that has shifted overseas so corporations can avoid regulations to conflicts of interest in scientific publishing, the temptations of money will always be a threat, and they can only be countered through the vigilance of scientists, the press, and the public." Greenberg can be reached at danielg532@aol.com or 202-244-4135. Levi Stahl is publicity director, University of Chicago Press, at lstahl@press.uchicago.edu.

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**NOTE:** When submitting material about new books, please send Word files only as an attachment. If you recently sent a book notice to Ruth but it doesn't appear here it's because she was unable to open the attachment.

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### **The Connected Child: Bring Hope and Healing to Your Adoptive Family** by Karyn B. Purvis, Ph.D., David R. Cross, Ph.D., and Wendy Lyons Sunshine (NASW), published by McGraw-Hill.



Adopted children bring great joy to a family, but they can also present unique parenting challenges.

- How has the past affected my child?
- What is the real message behind the challenging behavior?
- How can we build more joyful family relationships?

Wendy Sunshine met her co-authors while reporting on them for a Texas newspaper. "They felt I 'got' their work and invited me to co-author a book," she said. "Collaborating with them was a delight because each of

us brought different knowledge and skills to the process. It was a privilege to help them make their work accessible to the widest possible audience." Sunshine can be reached at [www.WLSunshine.com](http://www.WLSunshine.com). The press representative can be reached at McGraw-Hill Trade's publicity department at 212-904-4610.

***Hurricanes and the Middle Atlantic States* by Rick Schwartz (NASW), published by Blue Diamond Books.**



The first book-length reference that examines the 400-year recorded tropical cyclone history of the region. It offers chronological profiles of significant storms, from Jamestown to the present. Schwartz says he wrote the book to fill a vital need for accurate historical information concerning mid-Atlantic states' hurricanes. His book contains a collection of dramatic encounters—tales gleaned from articles and books, private journals, and interviews. "Storms similar to those of the past will visit in coming years," Schwartz says "Readers will learn lessons from bygone hurricanes so they can better prepare for what lies ahead." Schwartz, who has followed Atlantic hurricanes since 1967, says he waited more than three decades for a book on mid-Atlantic hurricanes and finally wrote it himself. His task took six years of intensive research and writing. It also involved more than 10,000 miles of driving and about 100 interviews. You can reach him at [ricshwartz@aol.com](mailto:ricshwartz@aol.com) or [www.midatlantichurricanes.com](http://www.midatlantichurricanes.com). The publisher's website is [www.bluediamondbooks.com](http://www.bluediamondbooks.com).

***Who's Afraid of Marie Curie? The Challenges Facing Women in Science and Technology* by Linley Erin Hall (NASW), published by Seal Press.**



Women comprise 51 percent of the work force but hold only 26 percent of all IT jobs, and they are underrepresented by a 2-to-1 ratio in physical science fields such as chemistry and physics. Hall, a Berkeley, Calif. freelance uncovers the subtle and not-so subtle gender bias that begins in early childhood and continues through the hiring process and in the workplace environment. She describes the intense demands the fields of science and engineering place on a woman's time and energy and how this impacts balancing a career and family. She reveals the isolation that women in these vocations experience as they study and work surrounded by men. She also explores why women choose to leave science and engineering and what they decide to do afterward. Hall can

be reached at [lhall@nasw.org](mailto:lhall@nasw.org) or 415-282-8549. The press representative is Darcy Cohan at [darcy.cohan@avalonpub.com](mailto:darcy.cohan@avalonpub.com) or 510-595-3664 ext. 315.

***The Science of Dune* edited by Kevin R. Grazier, Ph.D., published by BenBella Books.**



Several NASW members (Sibylle Hechtel, Carol Hart, Sergio Pisto, and David M. Lawrence) contributed chapters to this exploration of science-fiction author Frank Herbert's world in his popular *Dune* series. Hechtel contributed the chapter on "The Biology of the Sandworm" after received an unexpected e-mail asking if she'd tackle such an assignment. She was more than interested. "I'd first read *Dune* in high school and later read all the sequels," she said. "I still spend unjustifiably large portions of my free time reading science fiction." The assignment was for a scientifically grounded extrapolation and imaginative thinking to describe the biology of an imaginary animal. Hechtel holds a Ph.D. from the department of ecology and evolutionary biology, University of California at Irvine, which prepared her well for speculating on the ecology and physiology of an imaginary 1,000-foot-long predatory "sandworm." Could such an animal exist? How would it move? What would it eat? How would it reproduce? What is the life cycle? Since Herbert never mentioned what sandworms ate, and since no plants grow above ground on *Dune*, Hechtel speculates that the sandworms had to depend on food grown underground. Hechtel's e-mail is [sibylle@nasw.org](mailto:sibylle@nasw.org).

***King's Gambit: A Son, A Father, And The World's Most Dangerous Game* by Paul Hoffman, published by Hyperion.**



Editor and chief of *Discover*, Hoffman's book is part memoir (the story of his childhood in Greenwich Village with a brilliant, bohemian, Ping-Pong-hustling dad, and his escape into chess to avoid facing unpleasant truths about his father) and part an insightful look at the crazy world of championship chess, including the stereotypical lunatic Russian grandmasters (one asked that his chair be x-rayed and dismantled to make sure Bobby Fischer hadn't implanted a harmful radiation emitter inside it). Hoffman also describes chess-crazed Bulgarians, Canadians, Libyans, and occasional

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Americans who plow through the contemporary chess world in search of victory. *Publisher's Weekly*, in a starred review, said: "Hoffman's tale of chess, its soaring triumphs, and crushing discontents, is filled with enough international intrigue and warped, shady characters to pass for the latest James Bond sequel. Hoffman has achieved something singular: a book about the 'royal game' that will satisfy the general reader, kibitzer, and grandmaster alike." Hoffman can be reached through his website [thepHtest.com](http://thepHtest.com). The Hyperion publicist for the book is Christine Ragasa at [Christine.Ragasa@abc.com](mailto:Christine.Ragasa@abc.com).

***Citing Medicine: The NLM Style Guide for Authors, Editors, and Publishers [Internet] 2nd ed., Daniel L. Wendling, technical editor. National Library of Medicine (U.S.), 2007.***

The National Library of Medicine has just released a FREE new eBook with specific, up-to-date guidelines for reference citations. Although the "Instructions to Authors" should be followed for submissions to peer-reviewed journals, rarely is enough detail provided for the variety of sources used to communicate medical information. Ever wondered how to properly cite a website, unpublished material, or a conference poster? How about and visual media? Available from [www.nlm.nih.gov/citingmedicine](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/citingmedicine).



WWW.NLM.NIH.GOV/CITINGMEDICINE

***A Sixth Sense: The Life and Science of Henri-Georges Doll, Oilfield Pioneer and Inventor by Alexander Dorozynski (NASW) and Michael Oristaglio, published by Cherche-Midi Editeurs. U.S. version printed by Schlumberger-Doll Research Center, Cambridge, Mass.***



French edition



Dorozynski, who lives in Portugal, says he wrote the book on a freelance assignment for Schlumberger. Oristaglio is a geologist at the Doll-Schlumberger Research Center, in Boston. The book describes methods of searching for oil. Dorozynski's e-mail is [doro3@sapo.pt](mailto:doro3@sapo.pt).

***The Life of James Van Allen: The First Eight Billion Miles by Abigail Foerstner, published by the University of Iowa Press.***

James Van Allen, astrophysicist and space pioneer, for whom the Van Allen radiation belts are named, was among the principal scientific investigators for 24 space missions.

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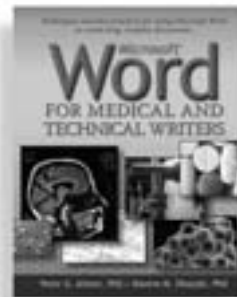
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Foerstner, who teaches science writing in the graduate program at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism and a former science reporter for the *Chicago Tribune*, drew on the astrophysicist's correspondence and publications, as well as interviews with more than 100 other scientists, for this biography. She points out that Van Allen, often called "the father of space science," led the way to mapping a new solar system based on solar wind, massive solar storms, and cosmic rays. The media contact is Allison Thomas at allison-thomas@uiowa.edu or 319-335-2015.

***Microsoft Word for Medical and Technical Writers* by Peter G. Aitken, Ph.D., and Maxine M. Okazaki, Ph.D., published by Piedmont Medical Writers LLC.**

The authors, both on the Duke University faculty, write that Word can be particularly problematic because the creation of long, complex documents puts unusual demands on the program. Sitken and Okazaki say they have developed techniques to avoid, minimize, or work around most of them. Aitken has been working in scientific and technical fields for his entire career and



Okazaki is a pharmacologist. They can be reached at [www.piedmontmedicalwriters.com](http://www.piedmontmedicalwriters.com). ■

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## The Scripps Howard Institute on the Environment

**May 12-17, 2008**

Florida Atlantic University, in partnership with the Scripps Howard Foundation, is accepting applications for this subtropical, weeklong training institute for working journalists who cover environmental issues. The fellowship pays room, board and field trip travel costs.

### Qualifications:

Applicants must be full-time print, broadcast or online journalists.

**To apply or learn more, visit:**

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[nsantane@fau.edu](mailto:nsantane@fau.edu) or  
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**ALABAMA:** Rebecca Goldstein\*, UA Birmingham. **CALIFORNIA:** Massie Santos Ballon\*, UC Santa Cruz; John Cannon\*, UC Santa Cruz; Jia-Rui Chong, *Los Angeles Times*; Olga Kuchment\*, UC Berkeley; Shi Jane Liaw\*, UC Santa Cruz; Margaret Lynch\*, UC Santa Barbara; Dennis Mammana, freelance, Borrego Springs; Shelby Martin\*, Stanford U; Julie Rehmeyer, freelance, Berkeley; Sabrina Ricci\*, UC Santa Barbara; Hayley Rutger\*, UC Santa Cruz; Madolyn B. Rogers\*, UC Santa Cruz; Jeff Sheehy, AIDS Research Institute at UCSF; Rachel Tompa\*, UC Santa Cruz; Maria Jose Vinas-Garcia. **DELAWARE:** Tracey L. Bryant, U. of Delaware. **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA:** Carmen Drahl, *Chemical & Engineering News*; Erika Englehaupt, *Environmental Science & Technology* (ACS); Benjamin Lester, *Science* magazine (intern); Margaret Putney, *Science & Spirit* magazine. **GEORGIA:** Brett T. Israel\*, Emory U; Lori King\* UGA; Heather G. Michot, Shorter College.

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#### Notice:

January 31 is the new deadline for dues renewal and completion of Annual Coalition Survey

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**HAWAII:** Lindsey Harle\*, U of Hawaii. **IDAHO:** Jeremy Castillo\*, U of Idaho; Sean Garmire, *Coeur d'Alene Press*; Ivan Kuletz\*, U of Idaho; Ariel Hansen, *Twin Falls Times-News*. **ILLINOIS:** Cele Abad-Zapatero, U of Chicago, Lake Forest; Scottie Kiersta-Wilson, *Healing Thresholds* and environmental health consulting, Chicago; Mary Salit\*, Northwestern U; Sandra A. Swanson,

freelance writer/editor, Wilmette.

**MARYLAND:** Carrie Arnold\*, Johns Hopkins U; Rachel Hill\*, Montgomery College; Julie Bloss Kelsey, freelance, Germantown; Sitara Maruf, NIH; Devin Powell\*, Johns Hopkins U; Cara Seitchek, freelance, Potomac. **MASSACHUSETTS:** Eric Bland, freelance, Boston; Grace Chua\*, MIT; Kristina Grifantini\*, Boston U; Susan Maya\*, Harvard; Audrey Resutek\*, Emerson College; Grace Tiao\*, Harvard; Christine Wenc\*, CUNY Grad Center; Ashley Yearer\*, MIT; Eva Zadeh\*, Boston

**U. MISSOURI:** Michael H. Ruffin\*, St. Louis Community College. **MONTANA:** Cindi Laukes, Montana Neuroscience Institute, Missoula. **NEW JERSEY:** Danielle Storhoff\*, Rutgers U. **NEW YORK:** Allyson T. Collins\* MIT; Rebecca A. Housel, Rochester Institute of Technology; Barbara Juncosa\*, Rockefeller U; Sion Emlyn Rogers, freelance, NYC; Peter Sergo\*, NYU. **NORTH CAROLINA:** Julia Connors\*, UNC; Mweia Uqoezwa, freelance, Durham. **OREGON:** Eva Sylwester, freelance,

*continued on page 32*

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## NEW MEMBERS

*continued from page 31*

Eugene. **PENNSYLVANIA:** Brian F. Johnson\*, Haverford College. **TEXAS:** Amelia Williamson\*, Texas A&M. **VIRGINIA:** Catherine Doss, VA Tech. **WASHINGTON:** Jamie Friddle, freelance, Seattle; Jennifer E. Hobden\*, U of Washington; Joo-In Jung\*, Gonzaga U; D. Peter Luyckx, MSN Health & Fitness, Redmond; Mary M. Miller, freelance, Woodinville; Rebecca Olson\*, Gonzaga U; Patricia G. Torrance\*, Bellevue Community College. **WISCONSIN:** Sara C. Christopherson, freelance,

Madison; Adam Hinterthuer, freelance, Madison. **CANADA:** Rachel Mason Dentinger\*, U of Minnesota; Shari Levine, freelance, Vancouver, BC. **CHILE:** Antonieta Garcia U., Gemini Observatory. **EGYPT:** Nadia Abbas El-Awady, Islam Online.net/freelance, Cairo; Zainab Ghosn, Arab Science Journalists Assn. (ASJA) Media Committee; Fida Al Jundi, ASJA, VP; Abdulhakeem Mahmoud, ASJA, board member. **GERMANY:** Nancy Allison, freelance, Bergheimfeld; Jennifer Truempler\*, U of Oldenburg.

\*Student member