



# SEJ Journal

Fall 2011, Vol. 21 No. 3

## Surviving the storm

- Covering and coping with disaster victims
- Our editor says farewell
- SEJ annual awards shine
- Negotiating the new journalism world

A quarterly publication of the

**Society of Environmental Journalists**

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# SEJ<sub>ournal</sub>

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Hurricane Katrina storms across the Gulf of Mexico shortly before slamming into coastal Louisiana and Mississippi on Aug. 29, 2005. Starting on p. 5, one journalist recalls covering his first traumatic disaster, and offers advice for others. PHOTO: NASA EARTH OBSERVATORY

# SEJournal editor Mike Mansur to step down after a decade at the helm

By CAROLYN WHETZEL



As I write this column Mike Mansur is preparing his final edition of the *SEJournal*.

Mike is stepping down as editor of the *SEJournal* as part of his transition to a new job as public information officer for the Jackson County, Missouri prosecutor. Sadly, the new position means Mike must also surrender his SEJ membership.

Mike's departure from journalism is a huge loss to SEJ and an even bigger loss to journalism.

And it's all because of the "business" of newspapers.

In May, this Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter for *The Kansas City Star* became yet another senseless victim of the ongoing upheaval in the newspaper industry.

The good news, however, is that Mike's unemployment was brief.

For more than 10 years, Mike has steered the *SEJournal* through its quarterly publication schedule, working with a team of volunteer editors and writers to produce issues packed with articles that help environmental reporters hone their skills and broaden their depth of knowledge on a variety of topics. He also guided the publication through a massive redesign effort, taking the journal from a newsletter format to a magazine.

"Mike has years of experience on the environment beat, and it showed," Robert McClure, the SEJ Board's liaison to the journal editorial board, said. "He came up with winning story ideas over and over. He kept the journal fresh on environmental topics while also using the journal to instill a healthy respect for the fundamental skills of environmental journalism."

"We are extremely sad to see him go," McClure added. "But he leaves behind a legacy of outstanding stories in the service of environmental journalists, a repackaged *SEJournal* that's one of the best-looking J-mags going, and the love and respect of his co-workers both at the *SEJournal* and throughout the organization."

Mike's contributions to SEJ go well beyond his job as *SEJournal* editor. He was among the first to join what he called "the best journalism organization in America," in the farewell column for the journal he wrote after wrapping up his second year as president of SEJ.

Over the years he served other volunteer roles, including co-chairing the 1996 conference in St. Louis.

"It's hard for me to imagine SEJ without Mike Mansur," SEJ Executive Director Beth Parke said. "He has been the lifeblood of this community from SEJ's earliest years. Mike has done so many things over the years, he's responsible for many an "SEJ Moment."

"There is a reason that William Least Heat Moon dubbed Mike 'The Reporter' in his book *River Horse*," Parke said. "Mike personified the humanity, curiosity and observant nature of The Reporter over so many years ... I always thought that Mike's alternative calling, if he were to leave journalism, should be to become a judge. I always recognized in him such a native talent for the reasoned weighing of evidence and measured,

thoughtful response, whatever the topic.

"Journalism's loss is the Jackson County prosecutor's gain," Parke said.

Thank you Mike for all you have done for SEJ. Mike, it is members like you who make SEJ "the best journalism organization in America."

## Creative Thinking

Staying "the best" j-organization means taking stock of SEJ's programs and services to ensure they are meeting the needs of members and other journalists.

So, I'm calling 2011 the year of creative thinking for SEJ.

Over the next few months, SEJ plans on taking a close look at its popular roster of programs, publications, and services to determine which are most highly valued. It also wants to identify new opportunities to serve journalists.

The effort is the first step in a data-gathering project that SEJ hopes to launch. It will be designed to help the organization adapt to the rapidly changing news industry as well as funding challenges.

Some of the questions/issues we want to consider include:

Should SEJ continue to concentrate on the Fund for Environmental Journalism, the mini-grant program that underwrites travel and other hard costs of reporting?

Should SEJ get involved in Webinars? What is SEJ's best social media strategy? And should SEJ help members learn to use new data, crowd-sourcing, crowd-funding, and multimedia tools?

SEJ wants to use the information to refine its focus, so that it can apportion its limited resources most effectively, as well as developing new ideas that provide the greatest potential for increasing the quality and reach of environmental news reporting.

As always, SEJ wants to hear from its members on how to improve our programs and services, so feel free to email or call with suggestions.

*Carolyn Whetzel covers environment issues in California for BNA Inc.*



Reporter Dan Grech (center) with Tommy Kidd, Jr. (left) and Horace Hodges (right) at the Coast Inn and Suites in Waveland, Miss., while covering the traumatic aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 for the syndicated public radio business show, Marketplace. PHOTO: COURTESY DAN GRECH

## Covering trauma, surviving trauma and gaining new insight into how to handle it

*“I promised myself the next time I covered a traumatic event, I’d be trained in how to sensitively cover the victims of trauma.”*

By DAN GRECH

Five days after Hurricane Katrina hit, I arrived at the Coast Inn and Suites in Waveland, Miss. Though I had no training in trauma coverage and had never before covered a disaster, I was lead reporter on Katrina for Marketplace, the public radio business news show. I’d already filed a dozen reports chronicling the destruction along the Gulf Coast from the storm surge east of the eye. But I wasn’t prepared for Waveland. Katrina had wiped half the town off the map. Homes were swept inland into piles of timber, or swept out to sea onto sand bars, or flooded up to their

eaves. The Coast Inn and Suites was built at the intersection of two main roads, on the highest point of town. When I arrived, about two dozen survivors huddled on the untouched second floor. The motel had become a refugee camp – one that would launch me on a personal odyssey with valuable lessons for fellow journalists thrust into traumatic stories.

I spent several days at the Coast Inn and Suites. Bill Lady, the motel’s owner, had opened his hotel to all comers at no charge. Tommy Kidd, Jr., a house painter, owned the generator that powered the fans that chased away the summer heat. He siphoned gas for the generator by threading a thin hose into the gas pan of abandoned cars and sucking until he gagged. Horace Hodges, a security guard at a local mall, carried his wife on his shoulders during the hurricane because she couldn’t swim. The storm surge

*continued on page 7*



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*To strengthen the quality, reach and viability of journalism across all media to advance public understanding of environmental issues*

The Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ) is a non-profit, tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) organization. The mission of SEJ is to strengthen the quality, reach and viability of journalism across all media to advance public understanding of environmental issues. As a network of journalists and academics, SEJ offers national and regional conferences, publications and online services. SEJ's membership of more than 1,500 includes journalists working for print and electronic media, educators, and students. Non-members are welcome to attend SEJ's annual conferences and to subscribe to the quarterly *SEJournal*.

Send story ideas, articles, news briefs, tips and letters to *SEJournal* Editorial Board Chair Robert McClure at [rmcclure@sej.org](mailto:rmcclure@sej.org). To submit books for review, contact Book shelf Editor Tom Henry at [thenry@theblade.com](mailto:thenry@theblade.com).

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### *SEJournal Editorial Submission Deadlines*

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**From the printer of SEJournal:** Our coated paper choices are 10% to 30% post-consumer waste, SFI Participant, FSC Certified, or both. One supplier is a member of the Rainforest Alliance. The pages are printed with a soy based ink ... the entire journal can be recycled just like any other paper — although I don't know why someone would throw away such a fine publication.

had reached his neck by the time a passing boat dragged him and his wife to safety.

One afternoon, I found Horace sobbing in a stairwell, exhausted emotionally and physically after days of recovery work. Tommy seemed to find a new confidence in his leadership role since the storm. Bill was coming to terms with losing a lifetime of work. I listened faithfully, as I was trained. But I didn't know how to respond to their searing honesty and raw emotion. I felt unprepared.

I wandered the hotel, meeting guests, collecting their stories. I found Curtis Fouquet in a breezeway connecting the two wings of the motel. He was splayed out in a lawn chair, his bulk spilling over the edges. It was the dead of summer and the heat was stifling. Fouquet's shirt was ringed with sweat, and there was no escape. His nephew, Steven Mayfield, was fanning him with a piece of cardboard.

Curtis owned the nearby Cajun Kitchen. He had just barely outrun the storm surge. During the storm, he had a heart attack and was revived with a nitroglycerin tablet under his tongue. His home was gone, his business was gone, and he was in tremendous pain.

I asked Curtis if I could interview him about his near-death experience. Once I began recording, he told me about his son Kevin, who had been murdered by a robber a few years back while on the late shift at the Cajun Kitchen. The day after his heart attack, Fouquet visited his son's grave.

"All I said is I wish I was with you. I want to be with you. I'm tired of life," he said, staring straight ahead with glassy eyes. "I said it's all gone. Everything we worked for. There's a point that you gotta give up, a point you can't handle anymore. And I just asked my son to take me."

His voice pitched upward. "I didn't think I'd make it through this. I said this is my way out, I'm coming. And for some reason I made it, you know, and I don't know why. What is it? What does God have for me to do? What are his intentions for all these people? They're homeless. They have nothing, nothing, nothing to go on."

I watched a bead of sweat roll down Curtis' face. His nephew stood nearby, his arms crossed, listening. I was unsure what to do. Curtis was clearly traumatized. He probably needed professional psychological help. Was I making it worse by interviewing him? Curtis looked up at me. "You come to the point when you're ready to lay your head down and go to sleep. And you hope you don't wake up anymore."

Was Curtis about to commit suicide? I felt panicked. I didn't know what to do.

That night, I listened back to Curtis' words as I prepared my report for Marketplace. I trimmed out the pauses, the stumbles, the incoherent phrases. I edited his plea for help for maximum emotion. Three days later, as part of a series of stories on the plight of the Hurricane Hotel, Curtis Fouquet's voice commanded the national airwaves for 41 seconds.

I moved on to other stories. But I couldn't get Curtis' words out of my head. They stuck to me like a burr.

When I wrote about this experience years later, I wrote that "Curtis' monologue lasted the good part of an hour." It's not true. I reviewed the tape. It only felt like an hour. Actually, within one

minute of Curtis saying he wanted to kill himself, I found a reason to leave the conversation. I turned to his nephew and asked him how he felt, hearing his uncle talk this way. Then I asked the nephew to show me some of the work he'd done to shore up the storm-damaged first floor.



Part of an industrial-strength air conditioning unit that fell directly on top of reporter Dan Grech's condominium in Miami Beach during Hurricane Wilma just two months after Katrina in 2005, resulting in his forced hiatus for eighteen months after the city determined his home was unsafe to live in. PHOTO BY DAN GRECH

Within a minute of Curtis Fouquet telling me he wished he were dead, I was gone. It was a stupid, cowardly response. But I didn't know what else to do.

\*\*\*\*\*

Two months later, Hurricane Wilma was bearing down on South Florida, my home. I spent the night at the office and woke up early to cover the storm. When I got to my condominium in Miami Beach, I found a tableau of disaster similar to what I'd encountered in the Gulf. The storm had dislodged an industrial-sized air conditioner from the neighboring building and catapulted it into my roof. It punched a hole in the ceiling. Water poured down the walls and through the floor. City inspectors deemed my unit unsafe. I was homeless. Suddenly, I was in the same situation as those folks on the second floor of the Coast Inn and Suites.

It took me a year and a half to rebuild. Throughout that experience, I began to reflect back on how coarsely I treated my interview subjects. I felt a new appreciation for what they were

going through. And I felt a new shame at how insensitive I had been with Curtis. I promised myself the next time I covered a traumatic event, I'd be trained in how to sensitively cover the victims of trauma.

\*\*\*\*\*

My training in journalism and trauma began just two months after Hurricane Wilma, in December 2005, at a conference in New Orleans organized by the Dart Center on Trauma and Journalism and the Poynter Institute. The conference was for journalists covering Hurricane Katrina who had been victimized by the storm. The Dart Center is a pioneer in bringing the insights of psychology, brain science and disaster response to the practice of journalism. The conference gave me a new language and framework to begin thinking about the coverage of traumatic events. And at a time when I felt profoundly isolated, I met a set of peers who were going through a hell similar to mine.

\*\*\*\*\*

Over the next several years, I made good on my promise to prepare myself for the next Curtis Fouquet. I landed a fellowship on trauma reporting through the Dart Center. I spoke to experts in the field. And I read manuals on interviewing trauma victims. With the help of my friends at Dart, I've assembled this tip-sheet:

Disaster victimization is about a loss of control. In your interview, try to give a measure of control back to your subject. It can be subtle gestures, such as allowing the person to pick which chair he or she sits in.

The good news is that people are very resilient. It's not easy to retraumatize someone with the questions you ask.

You don't have to shy away from conflict or distress in your interview. It may very well be an upsetting interview. Just give your subject permission at the beginning to end the interview at any time.

Be most cautious when asking about the particular moment that caused the trauma. You may trigger a flashback, in which the person relives the traumatic experience, with the same vividness as the original experience, the same terror and panic.

When you're talking about the traumatic moment, don't ask, "What did you do?" Instead ask, "What happened to you?" This is a technique to handle the common response of survivor's guilt, the feeling that the victim should have done more to prevent the disaster. Most people don't feel heroic after a disaster. They feel ashamed that they didn't do more.

Use active-listening techniques, such as reflecting and rephrasing what you're hearing, rather than analyzing or judging. Often active listening is all you need to do to successfully interview a trauma victim. It's upsetting to feel like no one is able to help you. It's more upsetting to feel that no one is listening and no one cares.

When someone expresses "suicidal ideation" — when he or she talks about wanting to commit suicide — the red flag is when someone has a specific plan and timeline for how he or she plans to do it. This is often cause for a therapist to hospitalize a person. But just talking about wanting to be dead, as Curtis Fouquet did, isn't a plan to commit suicide. I had a psychiatrist review my tape and while I certainly could have handled the situation better, Curtis at that moment was not a threat to himself.

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Another key and often-ignored aspect of trauma coverage is self-care. Trauma journalists often burn out or break down. But there are several easy techniques to build your resilience in trauma situations so you can continue to do your important work for longer and without damaging yourself.

One of the best predictors of doing well after a difficult reporting situation is having peer support and feeling connected. Social isolation is one of the biggest risk factors for mental injury. Seek out peers after a trauma situation, and talk to them about what you experienced.

Stay focused on your journalistic mission. This is more than mere voyeurism. Set coverage goals and remind yourself of those goals while you are in the field. That will keep you from slipping into a sense of hopelessness that often pervades trauma situations.

Do what you can to get a good night's sleep and eat well. Not sleeping or eating are two of the riskiest things you can do after a trauma situation — and they're also among the most common. Treat sleep not as a break from work but as a way to ensure you can continue working.

Take care of yourself and your family. You're preparing yourself to be there for the long haul. Pace your work

load. Don't burn yourself out.

*Dan Grech is radio news director of the WLRN Miami Herald News, the nation's most robust partnership between a regional newspaper and a public radio news department. Dan is writing the book, Hurricane Wilma: A Love Story, recounting his misadventures rebuilding his Miami Beach condo and wooing his now wife after Hurricane Wilma in 2005.*



Miami Beach authorities posted this notice on Dan Grech's condominium in 2005 after they determined it was unsafe to live in after Hurricane Wilma.

PHOTO BY DAN GRECH

# It's time to say goodbye, thank you and, hey, we can get through this together

My 10-year tenure as editor of *SEJournal* is coming to a close.

By MIKE MANSUR

In May, I was laid off from *The Kansas City Star* as a daily journalist. I had spent 25 years there, about a decade of that as environment writer. And I accepted a position as communications director for the county prosecutor. So a new world of dealing with the media and making a whole lot of crime news in Kansas City has begun. I can tell you that it's actually quite fun, and I've been pleasantly surprised to learn how great it is to view all those years of reporting and investigative training in a wholly new way.

But I knew that it would be best for SEJ if its quarterly journal continues to be edited by a working journalist, especially someone covering the environment or a related beat. So I offered my resignation to longtime colleague and a wonderful promoter of the *SEJournal* — Robert McClure, who serves as chair of *SEJournal*'s editorial board.

I have to begin any farewell by thanking a lot of key *SEJournal* contributors. For years, SEJ has produced a high-quality quarterly journal mostly on the kindness of our members and friends. For years, key staff members have led the way. Linda Knouse, Bill Dawson, Roger Archibald and Cindy MacDonald have sweated, argued and laughed over every comma, caption and image in each issue for years. And regular feature editors, including Robert McClure and Cheryl Hogue, have coaxed contributions, some of them for far too long with little more than a "thank you" or a pat on the back.

Many key past staffers and supporters will not be forgotten, including Noel Grove, Adam Glenn, Orna Izakson, Russell Clemings, the late Kevin Carmody and Denny Wilkins.

I also owe many thanks to Beth Parke and Chris Rigel, who for years have offered good advice, encouragement and support.

And there's the hundreds of contributors who took time out to write a short, or sometimes long, story about their latest reporting adventure or a how-to on using Excel or public documents. Thanks, thanks, thanks.

\*\*\*\*\*

I was just at this point in writing this farewell (about midnight on a Saturday in late August) when a strange thing happened. I became, at least in my mind, a victim of climate change. Another violent storm — there have been a lot of them this summer — took down a tree limb in my backyard, severing a power line and setting my garage on fire. The electrical surges from the downed wire also flowed into my house on the electrical circuit connecting my home power to the detached garage. And that fried a lot of the electrical wiring, not to mention the 200-amp box.

Joplin, Mo. Reading, Kan. The cover headline of the last issue of *SEJournal* told the story of journalism, too: "Darkening Skies."

Indeed. I understand the warnings. No particular storm can be attributed to climate change. But after one hits you, during a summer of cruel storms, the most violent in recent memory, you can't help but feel a bit like a victim of climate change. Now, several days later, I'm recovering and wondering about the future. The darkest of storms has descended on journalism as I learned it. Metropolitan daily newspapers, once the backbone of the nation's news production, have withered to conditions once thought unthinkable. The environment beat has suffered, and local news consumers are left without the basic fare.

"He must have felt that he had lost the old warm world," Fitzgerald wrote of that frightening moment with Gatsby expired, in a swimming pool, no less.

Yes, but I'm already over being sad about it. It's time journalism gets over it too.

Like the storm that hit Joplin, there's no undoing the devastation that has hit journalism. No, you can cry over it. Even for days. But at some point you stand up and you recover. You pick up the first bit of debris, then more.

You rebuild ... you remake.

It's time to buck up and get on with it. For those who intend to plug on, working at this business of trying to report what's happening, capture the most significant developments of our day and, maybe, convey to readers/viewers/listeners something thought-provoking, riveting, moving or instructional, let me stand up and clap for you as loudly as possible.

I hope to rejoin your ranks in some way some day. I'm greatly occupied now with a whole new view on the world, working closely with the county prosecutor on issues like violent crime, neighborhood prosecution and restorative justice. It's a lot of interesting and important work, and I'm finding that years of reporting about your hometown can be very valuable in creating new programs to improve that community.

So take some solace. You can always fall back on something like my new gig. But please don't give in easily.

I have faith that the uncertain future that I'm certain every journalist worries a little about each day will be built on the same old sound foundation: Good journalism eventually wins.

That doesn't mean that a lot of good journalists, even great ones, don't fall in the quest. That doesn't mean that the public won't lose sight of what credible journalism looks like. That doesn't mean that many owners of news outlets won't totally forget their duty. And that doesn't mean we won't all have moments of doubt, maybe even fear, of the future.

But hold onto those traditions that made modern journalism so important. Use them to create your own bright future.

Remember, if someone tells you something, check it out. That goes for editors, too.

And remember nothing is stronger than family. The SEJ family is like no other I've seen in journalism. Help each other. Cheer each other on. And hold on tight to one another. It will be a bumpy ride. But imagine the stories you'll have to tell about it.

All the best, and thanks so much.

# SEJ annual awards

Winners this year probed oil spills, natural gas and the world's natural resources

Coverage of the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, both breaking news and in-depth analysis of its cause, was a major focus of award-winning journalism honored by the Society of Environmental Journalists. But winning entries in the 2010-2011 Awards for Reporting on the Environment, the world's largest and most comprehensive environmental journalism contest, delved into a wide range of environmental issues — from Chinese drywall to natural gas drilling and the world's water resources. SEJ honored 18 entries in six categories. The winners include radio, TV, books, as well as daily print and magazines.

Reporters, editors and journalism educators who served as contest judges pored over the 207 entries to choose the finalists representing the best environmental reporting in print and on television, radio and the Internet. SEJ honors this year's winners Sat., Oct. 22, 2011, at a gala ceremony at the Setai Hotel in South Beach, Miami, during SEJ's 21st annual conference. View the winners list, links to entries and SEJ's 2011 distinguished judges on SEJ.org. And the winners are:

## Kevin Carmody Award for

### Outstanding In-depth Reporting, Large Market

**1st Place:** "The True Story Behind the Oil Spill" by Abraham Lustgarten, journalist, ProPublica, with independent producers Martin Smith, Marcela Gaviria and Ryan Knutson for PBS Frontline.

**2nd Place:** "The Pierced Heart of Madagascar" by freelancer Robert Draper, with photographer Pascal Maitre, for *National Geographic*.

**3rd Place:** "Fueling Fears" by Jim Morris, senior reporter; Chris Hamby, reporter and Emma Schwartz, reporter; Center for Public Integrity, and M.B. Pell, staff writer, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, in partnership with ABC News, working with reporter Matthew Mosk and correspondent Brian Ross.

## Kevin Carmody Award for

### Outstanding In-depth Reporting, Small Market

**1st Place:** "Chinese Drywall: Why one of the biggest defective product investigations in U.S. history has left homeowners struggling for help" by Joaquin Sapien, reporter, ProPublica; Aaron Kessler, reporter, *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*; and Jeff Larson, news applications developer, ProPublica.

**2nd Place:** "Deep Impact: Natural Gas Drilling in the Marcellus Shale" by Laura Legere, staff writer, *Scranton Times-Tribune*.

**3rd Place:** "Accidental Wilderness" by David Wolman, freelancer, *High Country News*.

## Outstanding Beat Reporting, Large Market

**1st Place:** "BP Oil Spill Coverage" by Josh Harkinson,



The original oil plume rushing out of the destroyed well head on the sea floor. PHOTO: BP AMERICA/PLC

Mac McClelland, Kate Sheppard, Julia Whitty, for *Mother Jones*.

**2nd Place:** "Chicago Beat Reporting" by Michael Hawthorne, environment reporter, *Chicago Tribune*.

**3rd Place:** "Environmental Reports" by Jeb Sharp, senior producer; Asma Khalid, freelance reporter/producer; Marina Giovannelli, Metcalf Environmental Reporting fellow; Alex Gallafent, reporter; and Ari Daniel Shapiro, independent producer; PRI's The World.

## Outstanding Beat Reporting, Small Market

**1st Place:** "Reporting on the BP Oil Spill" by David Hammer and Dan Shea, staff writers, *The Times-Picayune*.

**2nd Place:** "Environmental Reporting in Montreal" by Michelle Lalonde, environment reporter, *Montreal Gazette*.

**3rd Place:** "Science Skeptics, Corporate Lobbyists and the Assault on Maine's Environment" by Susan Sharon, deputy news director, Maine Public Broadcasting.

## Outstanding Single Story

**1st Place:** "In Middle East, Coalition Aims to Ease Tension Over Water Resources" by Fred de Sam Lazaro, correspondent; Nicole See, producer/editor; Tom Adair, videographer; and Patti Parson, managing producer; PBS Newshour.

**2nd Place:** "Oklahoma's Dirty Secret" by Jennifer Loren, investigative reporter, and Michael Woods, photojournalist, KOTV/KWTV/News6.com/News9.com.

**Honorable Mention:** "Renegade Refiner" by Jim Morris, senior reporter, Center for Public Integrity; and M. B. Pell, staff writer, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

## Rachel Carson Environment Book Award

**1st Place:** *Shell Games: Rogues, Smugglers, and the Hunt for Nature's Bounty* by Craig Allen Welch, William Morrow (New York, 2010)

**2nd Place:** *Yellow Dirt: An American Story of a Poisoned Land and a People Betrayed* by Judy Pasternak, Free Press (New York, 2010)

**3rd Place:** *Keeping the Bees: Why All Bees Are at Risk and What We Can Do to Save Them* by Laurence Packer, HarperCollins (Toronto, 2010)

# A look at award winners and the media's vetting of candidates on climate change

By BILL DAWSON

A lot has been written and said — some of it here at The Beat — about how non-profit journalistic outlets are striving to fill some of the coverage gaps created by the decimation of reporting staffs at many commercial news outlets in recent years.

The results of SEJ's 2010-2011 Awards for Reporting on the Environment offer further testimony to the increasingly important role that non-profit news outlets — both newer ventures and long-established journalistic organizations — now play in keeping the public informed about environmental issues.

The most recent list of SEJ Awards winners is a shorter and more streamlined version of previous years' rosters. SEJ modified the categories “to reflect changes in the way reporting is done” and eliminate “the separation of media, since journalists often report using various media.”

Not counting the three honorees in the Rachel Carson Environment Book Award category, there were 15 awards — first-, second- and third-place winners in four categories plus first- and second-place winners and an honorable mention in a fifth category.

The winning entries for 12 of those 15 awards were non-profit reporting organizations (including public broadcasting entities), or partnership teams of such entrants and commercial news outlets.

All told, 13 of the 21 news organizations or outlets that were honored by the 15 awards — nearly two-thirds — were non-profit or public broadcasting entities.

The New York-based investigative newsroom ProPublica, for instance, was a first-place winner in both the large- and small-market categories of the Kevin Carmody Award for Outstanding In-Depth Reporting.

The organization's large-market award was for reporting on last year's Gulf of Mexico oil leak, in conjunction with co-winner PBS Frontline. ProPublica's small-market award was for reporting on defective drywall, in partnership with the *Sarasota*

*Herald-Tribune* in Florida.

The first-place prizes in two of the other award categories went to a non-profit and a public broadcasting program.

The non-profit magazine *Mother Jones* was the top honoree in the category for Outstanding Beat Reporting, Large Market, for its coverage of BP's Gulf spill.

Other non-profit magazines honored with awards were *National Geographic*, the second-place winner in the large-market in-depth category for reporting on environmental problems in Madagascar, and *High Country News*, the third-place winner in the small-market in-depth category for what the judges called “an elegy to nature's endless resourcefulness.”

The second public broadcasting program receiving a top award was *PBS Newshour*, which was the first-place winner for Outstanding Single Story with a piece on water issues in the Middle East.

Another honoree in the public broadcasting field was PRI's *The World*, partnering with the University of Rhode Island's Metcalf Environmental Reporting Fellowships. The team won the third-place award in the large-market beat category for stories on a variety of subjects. Another public broadcasting winner was Maine Public Broadcasting, winning the third-place Small-Market Beat prize for an entry entitled “Science Skeptics, Corporate Lobbyists and the Assault on Maine's Environment.”

Rounding out the list of non-profit organizations receiving honors was the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Public Integrity with recognition in two categories for its investigative project reporting on safety issues at oil refineries.

The Center project, with the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and ABC News as partners, was the third-place winner in the large-market in-depth category. The Center and the Atlanta paper also received an honorable mention for Outstanding Single Story.



## Mother Jones

For a comprehensive list of the winners, see SEJ.org or the accompanying article on page 10.

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In honoring the Maine Public Broadcasting entry in the latest SEJ Awards, the judges observed:

“Politicians often fudge and prevaricate, and it is the journalist’s obligation to determine the difference between truth, ‘truthiness,’ and downright lies. In a series of reports, [MPB deputy news director] **Susan P. Sharon** took the governor’s own words and followed them where they led: as often as not, to misinformation, disinformation, and falsehood.”

Your Beat columnist agrees that work such as Sharon’s is “the journalist’s obligation,” but that doesn’t mean it’s an obligation that every journalist meets, every time he or she writes or broadcasts a story.

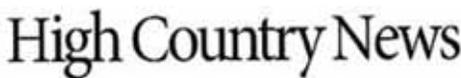
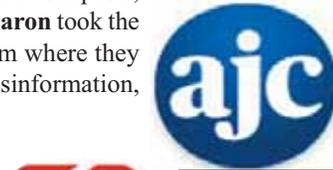
A frequent charge against the news media over the years has been that, rather than meeting their truth-verifying (and falsehood-

scientific community, especially among climate specialists, on whether climate change is primarily caused by natural or man-made forces. The overwhelming majority of scientists polled feel that human activity is the primary driver of climate change. Also, based on scientific studies by the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] and others, global warming over the past 50 years has been primarily driven by human activity.

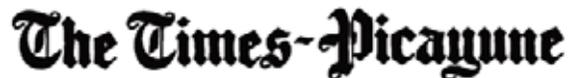
“Based upon the preponderance of evidence we conclude that [former Minnesota Gov.] Tim Pawlenty’s claims are both incorrect and misleading to the public, who may not be familiar with the science behind climate change. It is not ‘fair to say the science is in dispute,’ as if there are good arguments on both sides. Rather, there is significant scientific consensus that human beings are contributing to global warming.”

Shortly after another governor — Texan Rick Perry — jumped into the race for the Republican nomination, he made some remarks on climate change that drew a flurry of media attention.

Perry had long been an often-joking “skeptic” about climate science, progressing in his 2010 book *Fed Up!* to the harder-edged charge that the science behind



identifying) obligation, many journalists, in the service of “balance,” too often created a “false equivalence” in reports on climate change — counterposing the conclusions of the great majority of scientists and the criticisms of that consensus by a much smaller group of “skeptic” scientists.



Time will tell, of course, but conclusion-drawing inquiries into the accuracy of two prominent politicians’ climate assertions by a pair of journalistic fact-checking services in August, plus other related reporting at the same time, may signal a greater interest among journalists in avoiding the “false equivalence” charges.

First, the *St. Petersburg Times*’ PolitiFact (winner of a Pulitzer Prize in 2009) gave a “false” rating to former GOP presidential hopeful Tim Pawlenty’s claim that there is “scientific dispute” about climate change and that “the weight of evidence is that most of it, maybe all of it, is because of natural causes ...”

PolitiFact came down hard:

“Based on our research, there is very little dispute in the

the idea of man-made global warming is “one contrived phony mess” based on “doctored data.”

Soon after announcing his presidential candidacy, he added the new (for him) allegation of motive — scientists manipulated data so they could have “dollars rolling into their projects.” At the same time, he claimed that “almost weekly or even daily scientists are coming forward and questioning the original idea that man-made global warming is what is causing the climate to change.”

Among many other news reports — some of which focused largely on the years-old fact that Perry publicly dissents from mainstream climate science — was an inquiry into the accuracy of his campaign-trail assertions by the *Washington Post*’s Fact Checker columnist **Glenn Kessler**.

Like PolitiFact with Pawlenty, Kessler pulled no punches in an Aug. 18 column, awarding Perry “Four Pinocchios” — Fact Checker’s rating for politician statements with the highest level of untruth (which it calls “whoppers”).

Kessler found that neither the data manipulation charge nor the claim that increasing numbers of scientists question man-made warming was true. His overall conclusion:

“Perry’s statement suggests that, on the climate change issue, the governor is willfully ignoring the facts and making false accusations based on little evidence. He has every right to be a skeptic — all scientific theories should be carefully scrutinized — but that does not give him carte blanche to simply make things up.”

Hey, it’s about time for some truth-telling, wrote **RL Miller** in *Grist*, the environmentalist web magazine, regarding the PolitiFact and Fact Checker reports:

“At long last, mainstream media begins to pay attention to the flat denial of basic climate science being pushed by right-wing Republican presidential candidates.

“Last year, my work on *Climate Zombies* — climate-denying candidates running for Congress — earned me a snippet on a *New York Times* blog, but most mainstream media ran stories presenting climate science as an issue with two sides.

“Things have been changing as the media realize that people who deny climate science also deny other scientific realities.”

Miller concluded by asking:

“Will the rest of the mainstream media now call out [U.S. Rep. Michele] Bachmann and Perry for repeating obvious falsities? Or will their statements be presented as one legitimate side of a two-sided debate?”

A subsequent article on Poynter Institute’s website weighed such questions and found that reporting on politicians’ climate claims may increasingly be highlighting the occasions when they depart from the consensus scientific view.

**Adam Hochberg**, writing in the Aug. 23 piece about Perry’s climate comments (and his skeptical remarks later about evolution), examined “the challenge journalists face when science intermingles with politics.”

“Many of the media accounts” of Perry’s climate remarks “attempted to reflect the scientific context,” Hochberg concluded. One example he cited:

“The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* told readers in Perry’s home state, ‘While most climate scientists believe that climate change is real and that fossil fuel combustion is helping warm the Earth, a core group of dissenters, coupled with some conservative groups and activists, has challenged that view.’

“I worked on that sentence for about 10 minutes,” *Star-Telegram* political reporter **Aman Batheja** told me in a phone interview. “That was an important part of the story, that Perry was saying something that’s different from what most experts in the field feel.”

However, Hochberg wrote, “a handful of media organizations chose to report Perry’s comments without any scientific context.” One example he provided was Agence France-Presse:

The AFP story “included some interesting information, including polls showing a good deal of doubt among the public about evolution and man’s effect on the climate,” he observed.

Hochberg added: “But AFP correspondent **Mira Oberman** said in a phone interview ... that she regrets omitting the scientific perspective from her story about the Texas governor’s remarks.

“‘I should have thrown a line in there saying this runs contrary to the opinion of the overwhelming majority of scientists,’ said Oberman, who writes mainly for an overseas audience.

“What’s problematic for some journalists is they get caught up in the idea that you have to be balanced and you can’t take a partisan position,” Oberman said. ‘Once a politician

turns a fact-based issue into something that’s partisan, they feel handcuffed.”

*Bill Dawson is assistant editor of the SEJournal.*



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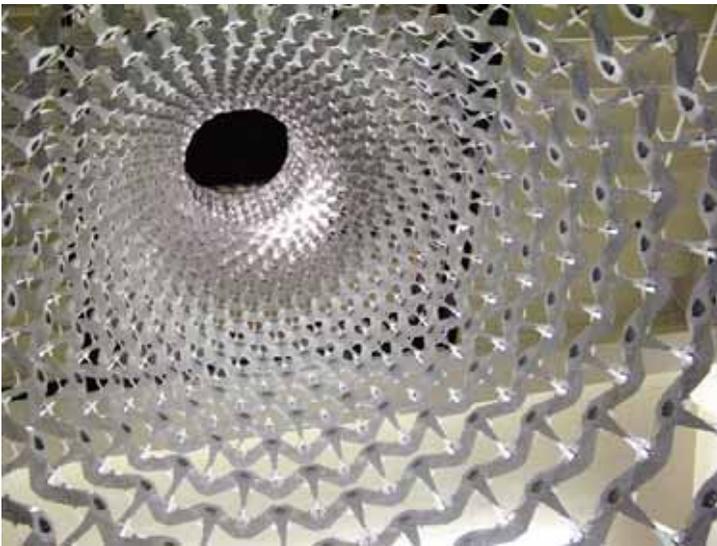
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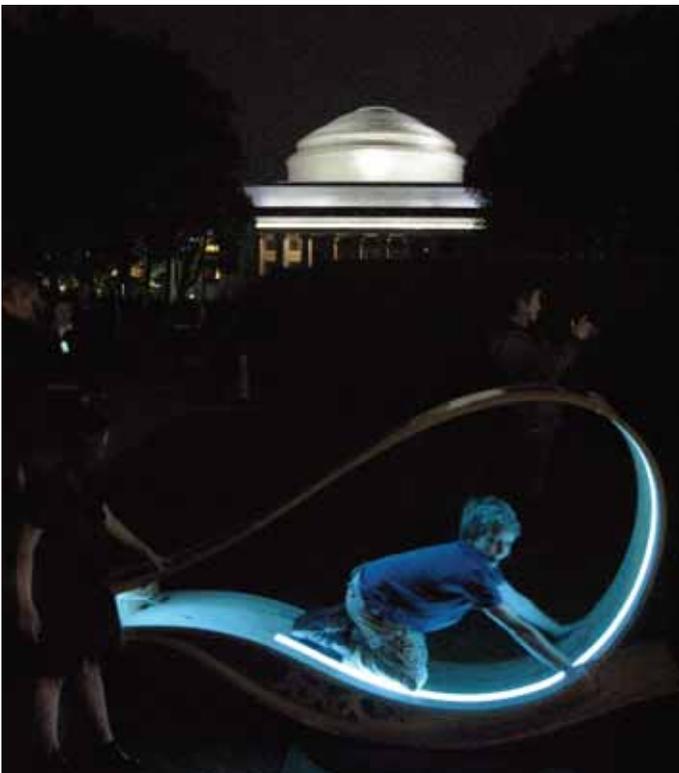
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# MIT @ 150 = FAST

Text & photos by ROGER ARCHIBALD

When the Massachusetts Institute of Technology received its original charter in 1861 just two days before the outbreak of the Civil War, few people imagined it would become the powerhouse of engineering, science and technological innovation that it is today. Now 150 years later, MIT has been celebrating its sesquicentennial all this past year with numerous exhibitions, performances, presentations and other events focused not only on its colorful past, but also looking forward to an even more vibrant future.

Culminating the celebrations was the most colorful event of all, the Festival of Art, Science and Technology (FAST) that during one weekend in early May presented for the public a score of different exhibitions and installations — all involving “kinetic illumination” — at numerous points on the Cambridge campus and adjacent waters of the Charles River directly opposite downtown Boston. In MIT’s variation on scientific notation, the mostly nocturnal display simply became known as FAST Light.

From the Institute’s Infinite Corridor linking many of its oldest buildings, to the large grassy courtyard before its signature Great Dome, to the half-mile long Harvard Bridge connecting the campus to Boston, and floating upon the waters nearby, twenty different artistic interpretations of the MIT experience contributed by multiple members of the Institute community drew the public to experience an unusual glimpse of the school’s brand of creativity (an installation of ice erected earlier in the year had already succumbed to campus warming). As darkness fell, the various exhibits literally lit up the night.

As with all such anniversary celebrations, the exhibition came to an end all too soon, leaving observers to wonder what MIT minds might conjure fifty years hence for their bicentennial. In the meantime, much more detailed information on the event can be found at its web site: <http://arts.mit.edu/fast/fast-light>.

*Roger Archibald is the SEJournal Photo Editor.*



**Above:** *Light Drift*, the most ambitious FAST Light installation, wirelessly connected ninety glowing orbs afloat in the Charles River with similar shapes ashore; as people interacted with the lights on land (**Below Right**), those in the water would change colors in “playful engagement.”

**Top Left:** Acting as a major centerpiece for the exhibition, *Liquid Archive* served as an inflated set of MIT’s initials floating in the Charles River onto which was projected historical imagery of the school’s “commitment to creating an energy efficient environment and environmental art on a civic scale.”

**Top Center:** Drawing on the concept of vanishing point perspective, *String Tunnel* was designed to lead visitors from the eastern end of the campus to the Infinite Corridor at MIT’s heart, that connects many of its original buildings.

**Just Left:** Located at four different spots around the campus, *MIT Mood Meters* used cameras to “gather and aggregate affective information (i.e., smiles) from people to estimate and reflect the overall mood of MIT during the Festival of Art, Science and Technology.”

**Far Left Center:** The empty space within an interior stairwell was transformed into *Dis(Course)4*, a vertical helical conduit constructed of aluminum flashing and thousands of cable ties “designed to inspire delight, wonder and communication between the floors.”

**Bottom Left:** Arrayed on the courtyard in front of MIT’s Great Dome, *Soft Rockers* utilized both solar energy during the day as well as kinetic energy from the motion of rocking to charge batteries that illuminated them at night and provided additional power for users’ portable electronics.

# ST + Light

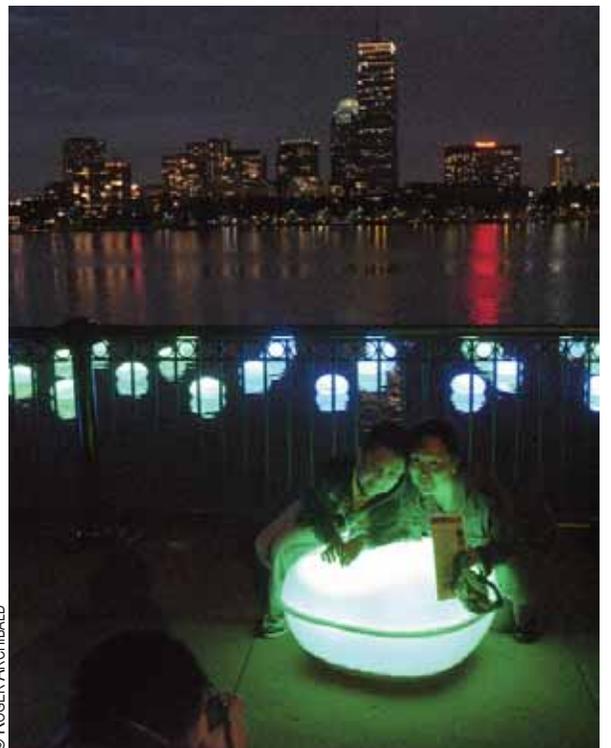


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**Below:** Consisting of hundreds of magnets mounted on rocker arms, *Maxwell’s Dream: Painting With Light* covered an entire wall within MIT’s main building; manipulating the arms to disturb their magnetic fields would create complex and elaborate interactive light patterns behind the wall.



© ROGER ARCHIBALD



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# 'Solid conflict' and superb writing — on the daily beat and for his new book

By BILL DAWSON

Craig Welch is the environment beat reporter for *The Seattle Times*. He won the 2009-10 SEJ Award for Outstanding Beat Reporting, Print. Describing the articles that comprised his entry, the judges said:

“Solid reporting is at the base of any good journalism. What set apart the entry from Craig Welch at *The Seattle Times* was the reporter's ability to bring together solid reporting on a wide range of topics, from the demise of local shellfish industries to conflict between wolves and ranchers, and deteriorating levees, with superb writing.”

This year, Welch was chosen to receive another top honor in the 2011 SEJ Awards — the Rachel Carson Environment Book Award for his 2010 book *Shell Games: Rogues, Smugglers, and the Hunt for Nature's Bounty*, an account of geoduck clam poaching and smuggling.

The judges called the book “a wonderful combination of solid reporting, good historical research and fine writing.”

In a book review in *The Seattle Times*, Steve Weinberg told how *Shell Games* had grown out of Welch's routine beat reporting for the newspaper several years earlier.

Welch, wrote Weinberg, “noticed a brief item in his own newspaper about the arrest of five poachers who had allegedly sold geoducks for more than \$3 million.

“At the time of the arrests, Welch knew nothing about [one of the later-convicted poachers] or geoducks. ‘Who poaches clams and who hunts clam poachers?’ he asked himself. He learned that a case from the 1980s had involved a geoduck smuggler who paid a hit man to harm a rival, not to mention a poacher who agreed to serve as an undercover agent for federal law enforcers. Welch could not restrain himself. He felt compelled to write poaching stories for the newspaper and think about writing a book.”

Welch answered questions emailed by *SEJournal* about his work as a reporter on the environment beat in the Pacific Northwest's largest city.

**Q: First, please tell me a bit about your involvement with environmental interests. Does it trace back to college or even before that? When did you get into environmental reporting? How long have you been at the *Times* and how long on the beat there? Did you cover other beats previously?**

A: I stumbled into environmental issues quite by accident. I grew up in the Midwest and went to college at the University of Kansas. Except for one vacation as a kid, I'd never spent time in the mountains. But on a whim, a friend and I took a road trip before graduating and tried to stay in as many national parks as possible in the West. My favorite stop by far was in Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks in northwest Wyoming. It was a landscape unlike anything I'd ever seen.



Craig Welch

PHOTO: COURTESY CRAIG WELCH

After graduating, I took a reporting job in Pennsylvania, but it lasted less than six months. I couldn't get Jackson Hole out of my head. So I sent a resume and a few clips to the local weekly newspaper, which had just lost a reporter. I was hired over the phone. The paper was small, but the leadership was exceptional. Within a year or two, I was writing about grizzly bears and oil and gas development and wildfire policy and logging. I covered wolf reintroduction to Yellowstone back when it was still in the planning stages.

For a suburban kid, it was a great introduction to natural resource issues. I was hooked. I worked a few other jobs, writing about politics and extremists groups (though not at the same time). I was hired as *The Seattle Times*' environmental reporter in 2000. It's the only beat I've ever had.

**Q: How is the environment beat organized and handled at the *Times* — and has that changed over time? For instance, how many reporters are on the beat now? Has that number gotten smaller with staff cuts of the sort that have hit so many newspapers? If there are other reporters on the beat, how do you divide subjects and duties? Do general assignment reporters or reporters on other beats report on environmental issues? If so, to what extent does that happen? Do you ever collaborate with them?**

A: The beat structure at *The Seattle Times* is fairly fluid. Our foremost responsibility is to issues facing western Washington, but I also write about coastal issues and issues reverberating throughout the Northwest (which, for our purposes, means Washington, Oregon and coastal British Columbia). Since the state is so tied to Alaska we also frequently write about issues in the north country. (The country's largest commercial fishing fleets, which work in Alaska, are based in Seattle, and many of the oil tankers filled with crude from the North Slope offload at refineries in Puget Sound.)

Technically, I am the only environment beat reporter at *The Seattle Times*, but several other reporters write frequently about environmental issues. We have a regional reporter in Portland, Oregon, who often writes about the Columbia River, wind power and commercial fishing, and since he used to work in Alaska he often covers issues there. Another reporter officially writes about Native American issues, but it's impossible to write about the Northwest's Indian tribes and not write about environmental issues. She also does a fair bit of what many would consider nature writing. (She and a photographer also put together a special section this fall about the country's largest dam-removal project, which combined all of her expertise.)

A few years ago we had two full-time environmental reporters, but when the other one left the paper his position was replaced. In

my opinion, environmental issues are important enough that you can't have too many reporters working on them. But given the realities of the news business these days, management of *The Seattle Times* still dedicates quite a few resources and lots of space to environmental issues.

**Q: The judges in the SEJ competition in which you won the beat award praised your reporting and writing on “a wide range of topics.” Does the variety of that contest entry indicate that you regularly cover a wide variety of subjects? Three of the five articles were on issues related to ocean ecosystems and marine wildlife, one was on conflicts between ranchers and wolves, and one was an infrastructure story about old levees and flood risks. Does that mix reflect your typical mix over time — are marine issues generally predominant? How does the list of issues you cover compare to the issues that environmental reporters in Seattle were focusing on, say, 10 years ago?**

A: The best — and most challenging — part of my job is the sheer volume and variety of issues I'm expected to keep tabs on. One day I'll be trying to break news on ocean acidification or the world's most complex nuclear cleanup and the next day I could be writing about asbestos contamination or crab poaching or pesticide use or air pollution in a south Seattle neighborhood. I love that. The diversity guarantees my job is never boring, but it's also hard to avoid a bit of whiplash from time to time. It's not like there are a handful of sources you can check in with regularly who are on top of all of those issues.

It has taken awhile for me to really start to grasp the inner workings of the half-dozen state agencies and dozens of federal ones that dominate coverage. It's probably always been that way, and my predecessors on this beat were some of the best in the business. (*The Seattle Times* won a Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill, and the paper's former science writer and environmental reporter were central to that effort.) Still, for much of that time there was often a single issue — cleanup at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, the Exxon Valdez spill, the spotted owl controversy — that clearly dominated. That's just not the case these days.

**Q: Have there been notable changes in the way you cover the environment beat since the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* laid off the great majority of its staff and ceased publishing a print edition in 2009? The two papers previously had a joint operating agreement, with news articles on Sundays by the *Times* staff, but on other days the *P-I* provided spirited competition with beat reporters vigorously reporting environmental news.**

A: I liked having competition. I read Robert McClure and Lisa Stiffler every day. We covered issues differently — and, often, we covered different issues. But they're both smart reporters, and each brought something different to the table. There was a healthy mutual respect.

That said, I wouldn't say that I've dramatically changed the way I cover the beat. I probably write often now, because I feel a great deal of responsibility knowing that if I don't cover something it might not see the light of day anywhere. But the Northwest has great public radio coverage of the environment and, unlike some regions, also has a few really smart TV reporters who focus on the environment. Plus McClure is still writing for InvestigateWest, a new outfit that focuses on doing journalism and then partnering with traditional media outlets to publish

reporters' pieces. (*The Seattle Times* has published quite a few of his stories.) And Stiffler is doing a fair bit of freelancing.

**Q: Hearst has continued the *P-I* brand as a web-only publication. It now has a dedicated environment page but apparently without staff reporting or blogging, just AP stories and five reader-written blogs. One of those reader blogs appears to feature press releases and another hasn't been updated in six months. Not much journalistic competition there — in the usual sense. Previously, environment beat reporters at the *P-I* wrote a well-regarded blog, with original reporting and analysis. Has the *Times* ever had an environment blog? Any discussion of adding one? Any personal thoughts on what it would mean for your regular reporting if you were expected to blog too?**

A: I don't think it's really my place to critique Hearst's operation. There are great reporters working there under trying conditions, doing the best work they can. In terms of blogging, *The Seattle Times* has a quasi-environmental blog called Field Notes. It's focused primarily on natural resource issues, and is a mix of reporter's notebook and breaking news and other observations. You can find it here: <http://tinyurl.com/4xewso5>

**Q: How do your duties break down now, in terms of the kinds of articles you write? By that, I mean is there a typical ratio of daily stories to Sunday features to longer projects? Has that ratio changed over time, especially since the big changes at the *P-I*? Has it changed in connection with shifting economic conditions in the newspaper industry — that is, is there a different mix because of declining news space in the print edition?**

A: It probably won't surprise you to learn that there is no such thing as a typical day, week or month in my job. Earlier this year, I spent almost eight weeks on a story about nuclear-safety problems at a \$12.2 billion project to turn two-thirds of the waste left over from the nation's atomic weapons program into glass (<http://tinyurl.com/4ndn7nj>).

Sometimes I'll write three or four stories in a week. The ratio almost certainly has changed over time — we all simply have to write more than we once did — but the *Times* is no less ambitious. Our executive editor likes to say that he knows it's unrealistic to expect his staff to do more with less, but I think we all try.

The people who still work in our newsroom are there because they love the job and the mission, so when we have to do more short-term work, we often try to be more efficient with our time so that we still can do the more thoughtful, longer-term work. We may do fewer big projects in a year, but we still do them. And while the bar may be much higher now to get approval to spend the time and money to do a big project, I have no doubt that given the right pitch, editors at *The Seattle Times* would still say, “Go for it.”

**Q: I noticed on the print-edition copies of some of your contest entries that there were boxes directing readers to “web extras,” including video in a couple of cases. How common is it now for video or audio reports to supplement your usual text-based reporting? Do you have a hand in those yourself? Do they mainly accompany in-depth articles, such as the contest entries?**

A: *The Seattle Times* has really started to invest in

*continued on page 23*



# My old journalism world has crumbled, so how do I negotiate the new one?

## Here's some guidance

By BUD WARD

My old journalism world has crumbled, so how do I negotiate the new one? Here's some guidance.

SEJ members need no reminders that the world of journalism is changing, evolving, and, yes, in some ways even crumbling, right before their eyes.

But rather than feeling like door-to-door sales folks for Beta cassette recorders or automobile cassette decks, journalists should see in the changes all the opportunities and promises of new ways to communicate more effectively in a world as needy as ever for independent reporting, writing, and editing.

Let's grant that it is not always easy, given the attention-getting news of outstanding and veteran environmental journalists — just recently, the *Kansas City Star's* Mike Mansur, now editing his final editions of *SEJournal*, and *L.A. Times* veteran reporter Margot Roosevelt — having been “whacked” (Roosevelt's term) as the result of ongoing newsroom cuts.

Even a casual viewer of broadcast or cable news or of virtually any high-quality daily newspaper (remember those?) this past summer cannot have missed the specter of News Corporation's Rupert Murdoch and son being called before the British parliament. Just one part of what has now become continuing and expanding investigations into tawdry reporting techniques, in that case their now-defunct *News of the World's* hacking into private citizens' and some officials' private cell phones.

Can you imagine? Can you just imagine the reaction here in the States if a major news media executive were called before Congress to testify under oath on a major national newspaper's news-gathering techniques? Those anti-Fox News zealots, including some in the news media and revealing more their political biases than their commitment to independent journalism, would have the proverbial cow. Regardless of one's personal political leanings, those inwardly hoping for a spread of the sleazy scandal to the U.S. — and, specifically to Fox News, *The Wall Street Journal* or *New York Post* and other U.S.-based Murdoch holdings — need to think deeply about what's best for journalism generally, and not what might be worst, for example, for the ideological pundits who populate Fox opinion shows.

Closer to home for most environmental journalists, consider a recently completed study of the impartiality and accuracy of BBC's science coverage, and inevitably of its climate science coverage.

The study came about as a result of the BBC Trust's assignment about a year ago to an emeritus genetics professor, no less, at the University College London. (The Trust is an operationally

independent heir to the BBC's former board of governors, representing license fee payers, “the public who own and pay for the BBC,” in its words. Think of it as an ombudsman on steroids.)

The Trust in 2010 asked Professor Steve Jones to evaluate BBC science coverage, a step that climate science deniers doubtless hoped would result in a strong rebuke for “warmist” biases.

“Nothing could be further from the truth,” Jones wrote in a 103-page report, in which he said the challenge of reporting accurately, and without “false balance,” is nowhere better illustrated than in coverage of climate change.

While offering some concrete steps for improving its science coverage, including its climate coverage, Jones wrote that his “most important conclusion” is that BBC science coverage overall “is of high quality ... widely praised for its breadth and depth, its professionalism, and its clear, accurate, and impartial manner. Science is well established into programming, on a diversity of platforms.” (Do I digress here in wondering of how many U.S. news organizations such a judgment could be confidently expressed?)

Not that everything is perfect and beyond improvement, of course. Jones recommended that BBC “take a less rigid view of ‘due impartiality’ as it applies to science” and that the broadcaster “take[s] into account the non-contentious nature of some material and the need to avoid giving undue attention to marginal opinion.” Sounds like something much of the pedigreed U.S. scientific community has been saying for years about climate coverage.

Some more tidbits from the Jones report to the BBC Trust, the full text of which is available and must-reading for serious science journalists and science journalism educators:

*... impartiality checks are built in to the scientific enterprise. The objectivity of researchers is judged as they undergo a series of painful processes from the successful grant application, to endless discussion within a group as to the validity of a result, to a journal's peer review before a piece becomes public and then, quite often, to the presentation of contrary views in the scientific literature. Many of those put up in opposition to a scientist on the broadcast media have had, in contrast, no scrutiny at all of the claims they put forward. A certain amount of emphasis might be placed on the differential examination that the ideas of each party have undergone when considering the need for due impartiality ...*

Exaggerated, financially compromised, or overtly dishonest work should always be open to question; but science is not intrinsically, as elements of the media sometimes imply, a shady

pastime awaiting exposure by the bright beam of reportorial truth ... bogus impartiality (mathematician discovers that  $2 + 2 = 4$ ; spokesperson for Duodecimal Liberation Front insists that  $2 + 2 = 5$ , presenter sums up that “ $2 + 2 =$  something like 4.5, but the debate goes on”) can, perversely, lead to bias in its own right, for it gives disproportionate weight to minority views — and some of the minorities involved are expert in taking advantage of the platform offered.

Responding to the Jones report, the BBC Trust accepted the recommendation that it name a Science Editor to its news activities (whodathunk it didn't already have one?!) and that it strengthen and broaden its sources of science information contacts. The Trust says it will monitor BBC progress in these areas quarterly and report back its progress after a year.

### Journalism Partnerships ... Surely. But How?

In the context of a changing media environment, the Trust also indicated it accepts the report's plea that it establishes better collaborations — partnerships, one might call them — with the scientific community.

A good idea? Of course, it is. And it's clearly more necessary in this changing world of mainstream journalism, not to mention the growing salience and complexity of science as a component of public policy.

But how? How best to both “partner” with the science community and maintain the fierce independence vital to the best journalism and the best scientific work? How to collaborate or participate, in other words, while still retaining the standing to observe and comment impartially ... and be seen as doing so?

A recent example illustrates the challenge. Respected long-time energy and environmental reporter John Carey, now freelancing after years of work in *Business Week's* Washington, D.C., bureau, recently wrote of the contentious climate change/extreme weather nexus in one of America's most respected scientific magazines, *Scientific American*.

It's a dicey issue, with still plenty of room for debate on just where the science “stands” on the connections. At the end of each of Carey's three series — in the fine print, one might say — was this credit (call it a disclosure?): “Reporting for this story was funded by Pew Center on Global Climate Change.”

Say what? A news outlet of the journalistic standing of *Sci Am* (that is, high) and a writer of the stature of Carey (also high) engaging with a respected organization, but in a way that, at its worst, could be described as little more than “sponsored journalism”? Is that right?

There is, of course, more to the back story here, and those interested can read more at <http://bit.ly/no9LIW> and <http://bit.ly/qdKDgS>. (Talk about disclosure! That first link is to

the *Yale Forum* news article I wrote on the subject.)

Is that the kind of journalism-climate science collaboration or partnership we'll see in the “new journalism”? If so, can its potential benefits be realized without running the risks of its potential downsides?

Blogger and long-time environmental writer Keith Kloor, to whose site that second link directs, has his doubts, and he's been a lone wolf in the press critic blogosphere or elsewhere in expressing them.

“Astonished” over Carey's acknowledgement that he had shared a first draft and a final draft prior to publication with folks

at the Pew Center, Kloor decried what he called “a huge no-no in journalism.” While professing full editorial control over the content of the copy — and sticking to their guns on that point — Carey and *Sci Am* editorial management couldn't convince Kloor that the story was treated “just like any other story” would be. While far from a critic of the Pew Center and of its climate activities, Kloor asked, “Am I the only one who has a problem with this whole arrangement?”

If so, it's not clear that even Kloor's self-made brand of independent journalism/blogging is the way of the future. Without any financing and conducted more or less from his abiding commitment to journalism and science, he recently found himself asked by a prominent national magazine editor if he couldn't simply continue his site as a “public service.” The implication: Why a need for money in return for his labors? Speaking truth to power, as he does, is hardly widely seen as a career-building strategy in these challenging times, but finding the ideal journalism partner, a la the advice to the BBC from Jones, is easier said than done.

So what to do? Partnerships — with foundations, with nonprofits, even perhaps with some corporations or government entities — may inevitably be the Best Plan B given the near-term financial outlook for traditional “mainstream” news interests.

Examples such as ProPublica <http://www.propublica.org/>, the Center for Public Integrity, “Miller-McCune,” Minnpost.com, and several others at the regional and local levels give reason for hope and can serve, at least at some level, as potential models.

Here are a couple things to be wary of in considering such journalism “partnerships.” Does your dancing partner in itself make news, or wish to? That can be a bright red light, and certainly should at least be a blinking orange. Does your would-be partner have a single focus of interest ... the same issue you're addressing as a “reporter”? Does it have an established record of

*continued on page 23*



*Alchemist* by Jaume Plensa, 2010.

On permanent display at MIT, Cambridge, Mass. Like mythological alchemists who were believed to create gold from lesser metals, journalists today, in order to survive, are expected to perform their own version of alchemy — create more and better news coverage (now including multimedia) in less time with fewer resources from less-appreciative, more demanding management.

PHOTO: © ROGER ARCHIBALD

# World's growing demand for food has devastating environmental impacts. But focusing on economic fallout may be best course.

By RAE TYSON

The impact of climate change, exacerbated by a growing population, is altering the agricultural landscape worldwide, leading food-hungry nations to look elsewhere for cropland. Nearly 140 million acres — an area exceeding the U.S. cropland devoted to growing corn and wheat — have been snapped up across the globe.

“Increased pressures on natural resources, water scarcity, export restrictions imposed by major producers when food prices were high, and growing distrust in the functioning of regional and global markets have pushed countries short in land and water to find alternative means of producing food,” said the International Food Policy Research Institute in a recent report.



Two fundamental elements of agriculture that are growing increasingly precious—land and water—coincide at true crop circles (the kind that farmers make) like these in central Missouri. Each one requires a working well at its center to provide water for a radial, concentric system of central pivot irrigation.

PHOTO: © ROGER ARCHIBALD

The land-grab trend, occurring primarily in Africa, Asia and Latin America, has raised concerns among a diverse collection of food rights organizations, environmentalists and the World Bank.

“This is not merely a story about the booming demand for food,” said Lester R. Brown, president of the Earth Policy Institute in Washington, DC. “Everything from falling water tables to eroding soils and the consequences of global warming means that the world's food supply is unlikely to keep up with our collectively growing appetites,” he said in an interview.

In an article he wrote for *Foreign Policy* magazine, Brown wrote: “The rule of thumb among crop ecologists is that for every 1 degree Celsius rise in temperature above the growing season optimum, farmers can expect a 10 percent decline in grain yields.”

Triggered by population growth and concerns over climate change, the land-grab trend emerged several years ago. Driving it is fear that countries might not be able to supply sufficient grain for domestic consumption by continuing to purchase it in the international marketplace.

Crop yields in the United States have long served as food-supply insurance policy for many countries. But in recent years, the U.S. has steered more and more of its grain to production of ethanol, a mandated supplement for motor vehicle fuel. As a consequence, the United States has increasingly smaller quantities of grain for export.

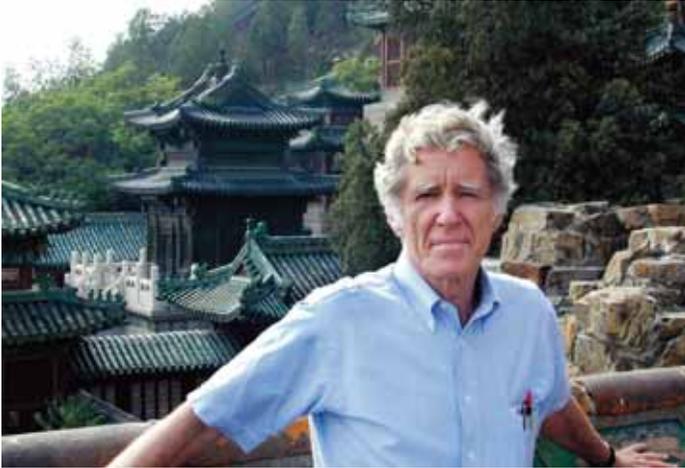
In response, countries like Saudi Arabia, South Korea and China — along with profit-hungry private corporations — began buying or leasing land in other countries to grow grain. Many of the land acquisitions were in Africa, where cropland can be leased for as little as \$1 per acre per year. Similar trends have been noted in Asia and Latin America.

These transactions typically confer water rights, meaning that land purchases and leases potentially affect downstream countries. “Land grabs are, for the most part, water grabs as well,” Brown said.

For example, water extracted from the upper Nile River basin to irrigate crops in Ethiopia or Sudan will now not reach Egypt. “That’s one of the more dramatic examples,” Brown said.

The potential is high for these large land acquisitions to spark conflict, and not just over water. Reporter John Vidal, writing in Britain’s *Observer*, quoted Nyikaw Ochalla from Ethiopia’s Gambella region: “The foreign companies are arriving in large numbers, depriving people of land they have used for centuries. There is no consultation with the indigenous population. The deals are done secretly. The only thing the local people see is people coming with lots of tractors to invade their lands.”

Examples of land acquisitions generating controversy are



Lester Brown in China

PHOTO: COURTESY EARTH POLICY INSTITUTE

numerous and widespread. In 2007, for example, as food prices began to rise, China signed an agreement with the Philippines to lease 2.5 million acres of land slated for food crops that would be shipped home. The deal was suspended after word of the agreement was publicized. Similarly, in Madagascar, where a South Korean firm, Daewoo Logistics, had pursued rights to more than 3 million acres of land, a contract was cancelled, a move that eventually toppled the government.

More recently, according to the on-line *Fast Company*, the Chinese Politburo commanded state-owned enterprises to purchase or lease farmland by the millions of acres to ensure adequate food supplies for the nation's fast-growing population. In 2010, Heilongjiang Beidahuang Nongken Group — China's largest state-run agricultural conglomerate — agreed to develop almost 500,000 acres of farmland in Argentina, followed by another 494,000 acres this year. A month later, Chongqing Grains announced a \$2.5 billion deal to produce soybeans in Brazil.

Ultimately, Latin America is a more likely candidate to become the world's next bread basket, according to *Fast Company*. "While China is limited to 140 million hectares of agricultural cultivation, Brazil is using 80 million hectares now, has another 200 million hectares of pasture for cattle, and can insert another 140 million hectares into production without encroaching on ecologically protected areas," said Charles Tang, president of the Brazil-China Chamber of Commerce.

"Imagine that a single company buys up, in one fell swoop, the entire surface area of Hampshire, or Luxembourg, or half of Tuscany, Maryland or Schleswig Holstein," said Duncan Pruett of Oxfam International. "Last year, around 45 million hectares of land were sold to private investors, the size of the entire country of Sweden. Many individual land deals were indeed as big as Maryland, but most were done in Africa."

The environmental impacts of this land-grab phenomenon are ripe for journalistic exploration. Coverage of land acquisitions in leading publications, notably the *New York Times* and the *Guardian*, has zeroed in on the economic implications — and not the environmental consequences. So far, the potential environmental impact has not been assessed — or fully understood. "We do not understand very well where things are heading," said Brown.

"It is a game-changing period we are into here," Brown said. "With [world] grain stocks low and climate volatility increasing, the risks are also increasing. We are now so close to the edge that

a breakdown in the food system could come at any time."

*Rae Tyson is a veteran journalist and co-founder of SEJ. Currently on the staff of Environmental Health News. Tyson lives in an old farmhouse near Gettysburg, Pa.*

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Oxfam International; Matt Grainger, Head of Media - tel: +44 1865 339128; [matt.grainger@oxfaminternational.org](mailto:matt.grainger@oxfaminternational.org);

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## New jobs, new awards and new ventures await SEJ members

By JUDY FAHYS

SEJ members never seem to be at a loss for exciting new projects, promotions and awards, and recent months did not disappoint. Here's what members had to tell:

**Tom Henry**, who created *The (Toledo) Blade's* environment beat upon joining that Ohio newspaper in 1993, was promoted to *The Blade's* editorial board. He is one of two editorial writers reporting to the newspaper's top editor, Dave Kushma. The environment is among several topics Tom is editorializing on. His environmental column that has appeared since 2007 in *The Blade's* Sunday news analysis section is to be replaced by one that will appear more frequently in the op-ed pages and include a broader range of topics.

Henry, who was elected to a three-year term on SEJ's board of directors last fall, also was named *SEJournal's* book editor in April and also was named to the magazine's editorial board that month. He continues to write an environmental column for *Great Lakes Echo*, an online publication produced by Michigan State University's Knight Center for Environmental Journalism.

**Sara Peach** won an appointment to be a lecturer at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina. In the fall, she will teach a course on environmental journalism for graduate and undergraduate students.

**Soll Sussman's** article, "Green Beyond the Menu," appeared in the summer issue of *Edible Austin* magazine.

**Cynthia Barnett**, longtime senior writer at *Florida Trend* magazine, is out with her second water book this fall. *Blue Revolution: Unmaking America's Water Crisis* is the first book to call for a national water ethic. Barnett is also the author of *Mirage: Florida and the Vanishing Water of the Eastern U.S.* Catch her in Miami on either the Lake O tour or the Sunday morning book authors' panel.

**Judith Robinson** received a grant from the Highlights Foundation in July to attend the Children's Writers Workshop at Chautauqua that included seminars on science writing for young adults.

**Dawn Stover** is now a contributing editor at the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, along with her other freelance work. She focuses on nuclear energy and climate change for the *Bulletin*.

**Bill Kovarik** has published a media history textbook, *Revolutions in Communication*, with several sections on environmental reporting. One section concerns the Science News Service and the Scripps Institution of Oceanography; it can be read in the

features section of the author's website: <http://tinyurl.com/3otb2t9> Kovarik is a professor at Radford University and former SEJ board representative for academic members. Kovarik's next book will be a history of sustainable energy.

**Elizabeth Grossman** was a Public Policy Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in June. She also received a grant from The Nation Institute Investigative Fund. In addition, her book *Chasing Molecules: Poison Products, Human Health, and the Promise of Green Chemistry* will be published in paperback by Island Press this fall.

**Dana Dugan** has joined the full-time staff of *Environmental Health News* and *DailyClimate.org* as assistant editor. Dugan will help oversee the research staff and coordinate social media for *ehn.org* and *dailyclimate.org*. She was previously a senior researcher at *EHN*.

**Miranda C. Spencer** has a new gig as a part-time morning researcher for the sister news websites, *Environmental Health News* and *The Daily Climate*, published by Environmental Health Sciences.

**Jim Detjen**, director of the Knight Center for Environmental Journalism at Michigan State University, was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to teach environmental journalism at Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangzhou, China from February to July 2012. He and his wife, Connie, expect to travel throughout China and parts of Southeast Asia during this scholarship.

This is the second Fulbright scholarship Jim has received. In 2002 he taught at Nankai University in Tianjin, China as part of his first Fulbright. At that time he taught what is believed to be the first class on environmental journalism ever offered in mainland China. His wife and their two sons accompanied him on that trip in 2002.

**Peter Thomson**, environment editor for the PRI/BBC program *The World* and an SEJ board member, is an Eleanor Bateman Alumni Scholar this fall at his alma mater, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The UMass Alumni Association says the program "provides students with role models that exemplify achievement of the university's mission through professional accomplishments and/or public service."

Thomson is grateful for the honor and says he hopes to enjoy the experience despite fears that it may feel like one of those recurring nightmares when you're back in school as an adult because you realized you missed a crucial credit and so never actually graduated.

Portland, OR-based freelancer **Bill Lascher** completed a Knight Digital Media Center Multimedia and Convergence Journalism fellowship at U.C. Berkeley. He also published a spot.us-funded report on newly discovered seismic hazards surrounding the Northwest's only commercial nuclear plant. The three-part piece ran on *King5.com*.

*Death Before Dawn*, **Christine Heinrichs'** account of the 2008 elephant seal shootings at Piedras Blancas, Calif. and the ensuing investigation by NOAA, was awarded third place in the Reported Narrative category at the 2011 Mayborn Literary Nonfiction Conference. "A nice trophy and \$1,000!" she noted.

**Terri Hansen** was honored with two Native American Journalists Association's 2011 Excellence in Journalism awards: Best Environmental News Story in a daily (*Indian Country Today Media Network*), and Best Feature in a monthly (*HCN News*).

Canadian SEJ member **Silver Donald Cameron** is host

and executive producer of the subscription web site TheGreenInterview.com. The site recently posted a Special Presentation on Bhutan, a package of text, documentary video and interviews about the tiny Himalayan nation that has chosen to maximize Gross National Happiness rather than Gross National Product.

The site's most recent interview is with Kartikeya Sarabhai, one of the world's leading environmental educators, who heads the Centre for Environment Education in Ahmedabad, India. Upcoming interviews include primatologist Jane Goodall and Ronald Wright, author of *A Short History of Progress*.

*Judy Fahys is environment reporter at The Salt Lake Tribune.*

### *Inside Story continued from page17*

multi-media work quite heavily. We have two full-time video producers who are exceptionally talented, and they're really great about sharing their knowledge and skills. I spend a lot of time on assignment with photographers and almost all of our photographers now shoot their own video as well as take pictures.

I haven't done much myself, but it's now an important part of my job to try and take video possibilities into consideration on every assignment. It's forced me to think more creatively about how to be on scene when people are doing visual work as part of a way to tell a story. I'm no photographer, but I like to think I'm actually starting to think like one.

*Bill Dawson is assistant editor of the SEJournal.*

### *E-Reporting Biz continued from page19*

funding other — and worthwhile and respected — journalism initiatives? Are they the kinds of journalists you want to be identified with?

It's likely anachronistic, given the state of mass media today, to measure today's news "partnerships" against the holier-than-thou separate-and-detached journalism standards of a bygone era (an era which likely doesn't fully live up to its nostalgic reputation in any event). But that doesn't mean serious journalists and editors can't ask themselves those kinds of questions as they contemplate the journalism partnerships of a new day. How about starting with something like, "What would an Edward R. Murrow think? What would a David Broder think?"

Most important ... what do you and your audiences think?

*Bud Ward, one of the co-founders of SEJ, is Editor of The Yale Forum on Climate Change & The Media, published by Yale University's School of Forestry & Environmental Studies and its Yale Project on Climate Change Communication. The site is supported primarily with funding from The Grantham Foundation for Protection of the Environment which, among other things, funds the Metcalf Institute's Grantham Prize for Excellence in Reporting on the Environment.*

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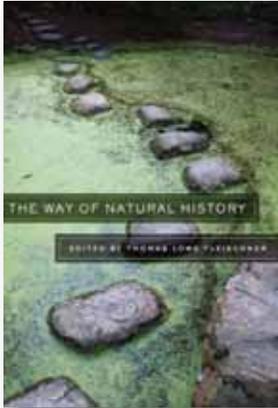
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### The Way of Natural History

Edited by  
Thomas Lowe Fleischer

Trinity University Press, \$16.95  
Paperback  
[www.tupress.org](http://www.tupress.org)

Reviewed by: NANCY BARON

When novelist Jonathan Franzen finds himself checking his email every 10 minutes, biting off chaws of tobacco, gulping drinks, and obsessively playing computer solitaire, he finds relief in nature — particularly watching birds. “To glimpse a rare bird somehow persisting in its life of breeding and feeding is an enduringly transcendent delight.”

That’s the theme of a new compendium of personal and revealing essays, showing he’s not alone in finding relief in the natural world.

*The Way of Natural History* features 20 authors, including scientists, poets, a rock guitarist, a professional gardener — even a former convict — who explore the importance of paying attention to the bigger world outside our own heads.

“What we choose to focus it on has enormous consequences,” writes editor Thomas Lowe Fleischer. “And what we choose to look at and to listen to, these choices change the world.”

Reviving the study and appreciation of natural history is a growing social movement called the Natural History Initiative instigated by a network of scientists and writers and artists, many of whom are authors featured in this book published by Trinity University Press.

The point is that while there is no “one way” to relate to nature, it is something we need to soothe our personal lives, not to mention help address societal and environmental woes.

For our ancestors, attentiveness to nature was a matter of survival, knowing the migratory movements of animals, and where and when to find food plants.

This intimate knowledge was understood to be essential.

It still is. But most of us have forgotten, or never had the chance to experience it.

The reasons are many: modern lives with little free time for play and exploration, the expanding role of technology, narrowly focused social media — all can distract from the natural world around us and lead to “nature-deficit disorder.”

Writers in this book argue that connection to a larger community of neighbors — one that takes into account animals, plants, pollinators, producers, predators and decomposers — is essential to environmental well-being.

Concern about nature-deficit disorder has caught the attention of the National Science Foundation. It has funded initiatives such as the Long Term Ecological Reflection project,

which is linked to the Long Term Ecological Research (LTER), a federal network of forests, deserts and other representative habitats under study.

Three of the essays in the books are part of this NSF-funded project, offering reflections on ever-changing nature and our relationship with it.

In some essays, scientists shatter their usual stiff, dispassionate stereotypes by showing tenderness for their research subjects.

Wolf researcher Christine Eisenberg’s essay, “Lessons from 763,” presents a clear case about why predators matter to healthy ecosystems. But it’s her intimacy with the animals and their lives that lingers.

“I cradle the sleeping wolf in my arms, keeping her warm against the morning frost, the way I held my daughters when they were small,” she writes. “However, anything but small, wolf number 763 is a sturdy, 80-pound, lactating female.”

Eisenberg names the wolf after her mentor Nina Leopold, and muses that the wolf, carrying her scent back to her den, links her forever to the pups. She sees these pups again as part of a team radio-collaring wolves in Glacier National Park. Her study of these wolves’ lives is interwoven with her explanation of how top predators create “more resilient ecosystems, help restore and maintain biodiversity, and help some of the damage we have done to the Earth.”

In a rollicking essay, “The Grounding of a Marine Biologist,” Paul Dayton of Scripps Institution of Oceanography writes of his early days exploring the natural history in the southwestern deserts and mountains. It has the feel of a Steinbeck novel, with life experiences shared with his brother, father and later his own children.

He points out that biologists who study nature are often dismissed as lightweights.

“Today young scholars are asked to study ecology without any sense of place, any understanding of the actual organisms living in real environments characterized by their important histories.”

As in many collections of essays, some are better written than others. But their insights or quirkiness make them all worthwhile.

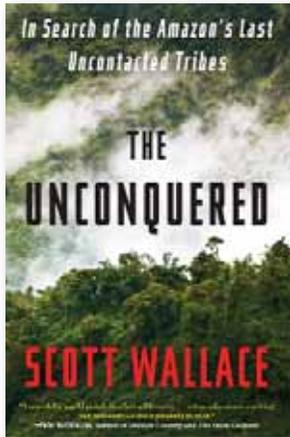
Ken Lamberton wrote “Yard Birds” about his experiences behind bars in Arizona. He describes dark laps around the prison yard each evening. “Sprays of termites, nighthawk ballets, and even an abandoned pelican feather holding a slip of sky against its vane, are the air that fills my lungs.”

Ed Grumbine writes from China on a “natural history of dams.” Grumbine was recently described in *Science* as “an eco-guru,” advising Yunnan on environmental policy and the perils of unrestrained hydropower development.

Robert Michael Pyle is reminiscent of Mark Twain in both voice and appearance. He knows more about butterflies than any academic. In his essay, “A Nat’ral Histerrical Feller in an Unwondering Age,” he describes the sharp pleasure of recognizing a butterfly by its behavior and the sadness of how few others understand or care.

This eclectic collection has much to offer anyone who cares about the environment, sustainability, and, yes, nature.

*Nancy Baron is the Science Outreach Director for COMPASS and author of Escape from the Ivory Tower, as well as the field guide to Birds of the Pacific Northwest Coast.*



**The Unconquered:  
In Search of the Amazon's  
Last Uncontacted Tribes**

by *Scott Wallace*

*Crown Publishers, \$26*

Reviewed by KAREN SCHAEFER

In 2002, veteran *National Geographic* freelance journalist and photographer Scott Wallace followed a 34-man team deep into the Amazon rainforests of Brazil in search of a mysterious group of about 200 indigenous people known only as the *flecheiros* — “People of the Arrow.”

By all accounts, this small band of native hunter-gatherers has never come into direct contact with the outside world.

They live in small, scattered villages at the headwaters of the Amazon near the Peruvian border.

But the purpose of this expedition wasn't to contact these people, gain their trust, and then study their ancestral lifestyle. Instead, the goal was to make sure the *flecheiros* remain permanently isolated from potentially devastating contact with global civilization.

*The Unconquered* is Wallace's first-person account of the team's harrowing three-month trek through uncharted tropical forests looking for — but trying not to meet — the *flecheiros*.

A page-turning adventure story of the first order, the book is also a fascinating look at a new way of thinking about indigenous populations.

The leader of the expedition and Wallace's guide is Sydney Possuelo, a household name in the Brazilian backwoods because of his defense of native tribes against ranchers, loggers and miners who seek to plunder the rainforest's riches.

Possuelo, then president of FUNAI, Brazil's Indian affairs agency, had already spearheaded a new concept in the management of indigenous peoples: Instead of trying to incorporate them into the Brazilian mainstream, why not create a protected preserve where they could continue to live off the land and maintain their way of life with no interference from missionaries, medical teams and mercenary prospectors?

But keeping the *flecheiros* safe is no easy task. The People of the Arrow are just one of dozens of tribes in the Amazon who remain isolated from the rest of the world.

FUNAI has confirmed at least two dozen such bands in Brazil.

According to Wallace, neighboring Peru has 14 or 15 such groups roaming its Amazon jungles. Others may exist in India, Nepal and the islands of Southeast Asia.

While it's hard to imagine that “stone-age” tribes still persist in a world of cell phones, satellites and social media, it's even harder to understand how difficult it is to police these isolated regions, to keep them free of outsiders who could endanger a way

of life that has nearly disappeared.

As Wallace follows Possuelo and his team into the jungle, he encounters squatters who farm the jungle for endangered fish and turtle eggs, gold miners who ransack rivers and destroy their ecology in search of precious metals, and native tribes who live at the very edge of civilization.

At a stay in one native settlement, Possuelo discovers that villagers have occasionally spotted *indios bravos* — wild Indians — and he urges them to keep their distance. With no immunity to disease, even the briefest contact could devastate isolated tribes.

The climax of the story arrives as, deep in the heart of *flecheiro* country, two members of the expedition disobey orders and lead the team straight through a just-deserted *flecheiro* village.

Cooking fires still smoke as team members grab cultural souvenirs of the near-encounter: a broken arrow stained with curare, a deadly poison, and a blowgun.

Wallace and men of the FUNAI team camp that night in terror that a first-person encounter with the *flecheiros* could end in death.

Packed with details about rainforest ecology, indigenous peoples, and the perils of rainforest life, Wallace's narrative is apt and penetrating. He wonders aloud whether leaving axes and cooking vessels for the “wild Indians” isn't a form of contact that could ultimately alter the *flecheiros'* way of life. And he raises an eyebrow over the high-handed authority Possuelo attempts to exert on both expedition members and illegal trespassers of the indigenous preserve.

There's no question the authenticity of Wallace's story is genuine. But he leaves readers with the unspoken question: How long will South American governments such as Brazil's be willing and able to protect these isolated people from contact with a world that will ultimately destroy them?

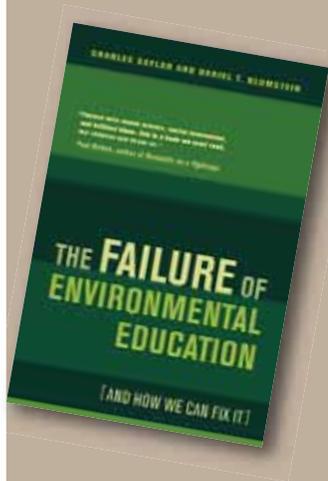
*Karen Schaefer is an SEJ member and award-winning freelance radio reporter based in Kent, Ohio.*



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## The Failure of Environmental Education (And How We Can Fix It)

by *Charles Saylan*

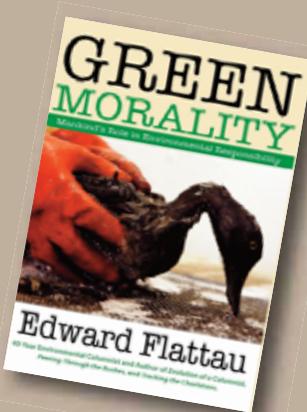
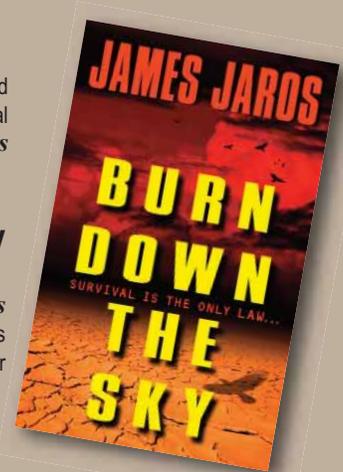
Education has failed to reach its potential in fighting climate change and environmental degradation. This passionate indictment of environmental education offers a controversial new vision. *University of California Press*

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## Burn Down the Sky

by *James Jaros*

A post-apocalyptic climate collapse thriller set in the latter part of this century. "Intense ... amazing ... gifted writing." Bill Evans, bestselling author of *Category 7*. *Harper Collins Voyager*



## Green Morality

by *Edward Flattau*

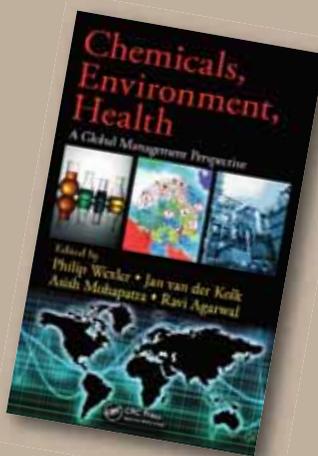
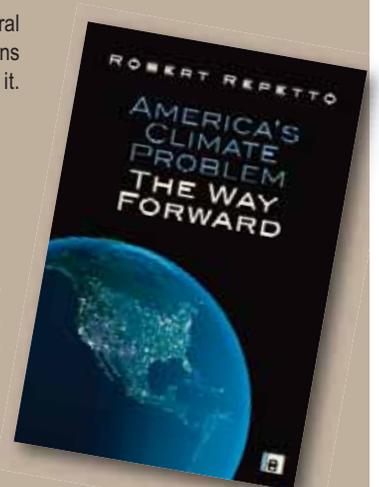
A journalist's polemic on human beings' ethical relationship with the natural world around them. The main theme is the moral obligation to future generations to leave the planet in as good or better shape than we found it. *The Way Things Are Publications*

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## America's Climate Problem

by *Robert Repetto*

Robert Repetto, a leading environmental expert, applies the latest analysis and findings to illuminate America's current climate change controversies and our best policy options. *Earthscan*



## Chemicals, Environment, Health: A Global Management Perspective

by *Philip Wexler*

This book summarizes the global and multi-lateral efforts to manage the risks for environment or health of chemicals on the world stage. *CRC Press*

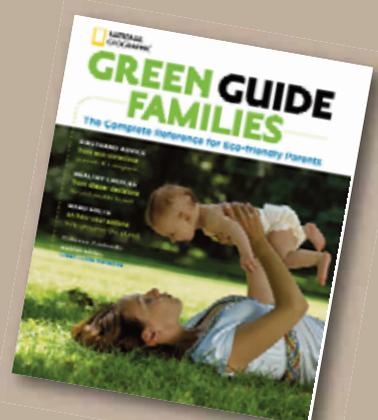
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## Green Guide Families

### The Complete Reference for Eco-Friendly Parents

by *Catherine Zandonella*

The go-to guide for a new generation of parents, filled with practical advice backed by the latest research. *National Geographic Society*





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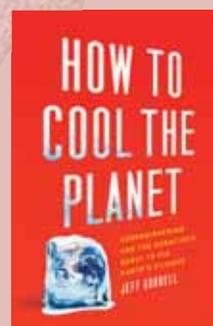
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Following the passage of Hurricane Katrina in August 2005 a NOAA flight surveyed the impact on the Gulf of Mexico shoreline between Waveland and Bay St. Louis, Miss. where the storm made landfall with its most powerful winds. Dan Grech reported on the aftermath of Katrina from Waveland, where he learned some valuable lessons about how to cover a traumatic disaster shortly before experiencing one himself. His story begins on page 5.

NOAA PHOTO