

NewsPro

The Magazine for News Professionals

October 2010 **crain**

Survey Results

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Filling the News Void

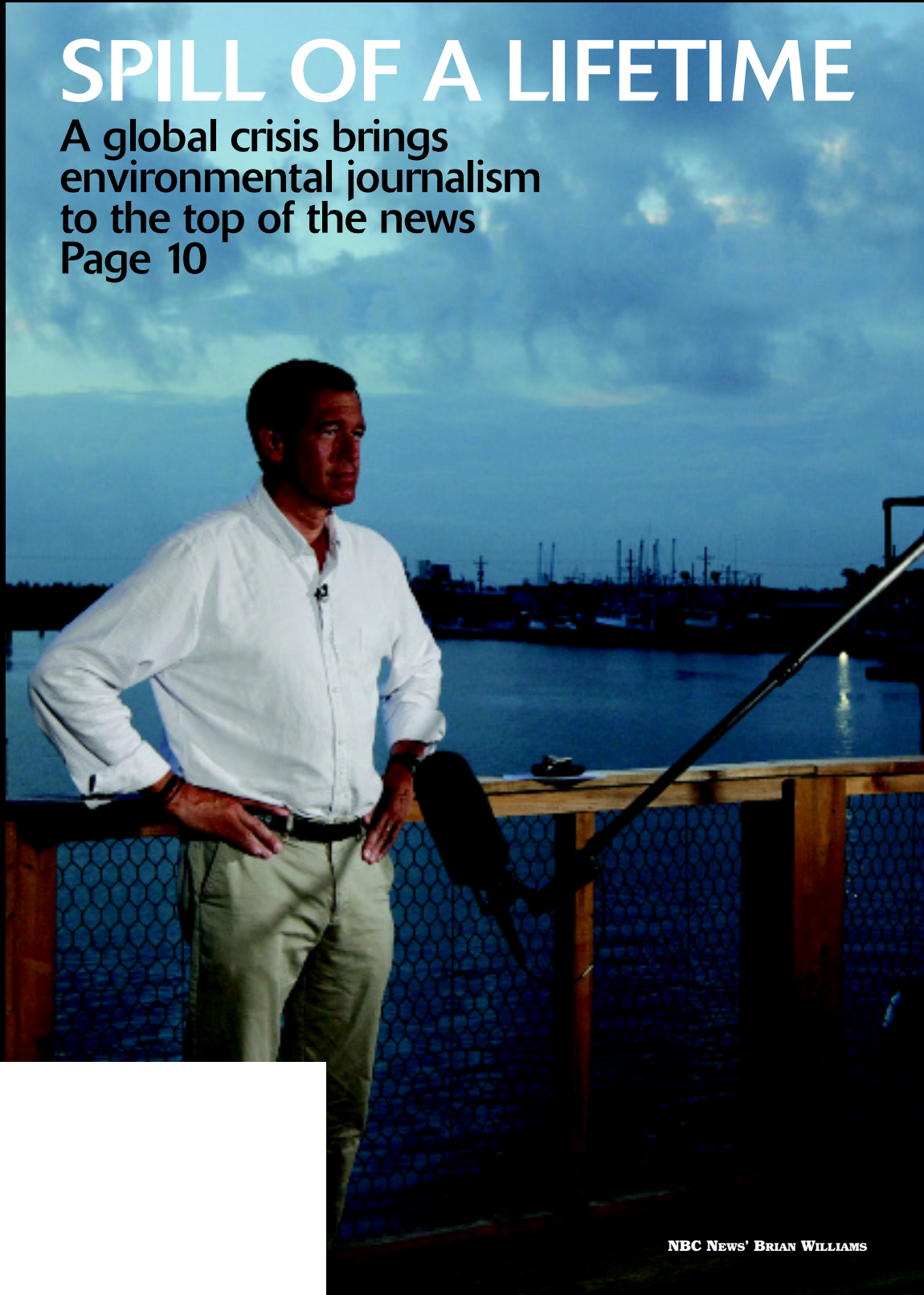
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NBC NEWS' BRIAN WILLIAMS



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FROM THE EDITOR

The Year of Living Dangerously



Natural and man-made environmental disasters have dominated the news in 2010, the most eventful year in recent memory for journalists who cover the beat — and it's not even over yet.

From the devastating earthquake in Haiti and the Icelandic volcano eruptions that shut down European air travel, to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill nightmare in the Gulf of Mexico and assorted mine disasters, reporters and editors have been called upon to gather, interpret and disseminate highly informed news at a rapid-fire pace.

As Debra Kaufman's cover story on Page 10 details, the Gulf spill in particular placed taxing demands on the media that covered it, requiring contributors with working knowledge of not only the environmental aspects of the story, but of economics and the arcane details of petroleum industry technology. A tall order, and one made particularly challenging by the trend toward generalists at many news organizations. If ever there were a case for specialization in journalism, this was it.

And while such specialization has been endangered by the vast changes economic hardship has wrought in the news business, it's far from extinct. As Dinah Eng discovers in her piece on Page 30 about independent news services — many of them nonprofit online or multimedia operations with foundation backing — traditional journalists are finding ways to pursue their specialties and the kinds of investigations much of big media has left behind.

So when the Society of Environmental Journalists gathers in Missoula, Mont., for its 20th annual conference Oct. 13 to 17, there will be plenty to discuss, as is highlighted in Elizabeth Jensen's story on Page 18. Attendance is expected to run about equal to last year's 800, a good sign in a time of spotty freelance livelihoods and lower wages (the latter a major point of concern in this year's poll of SEJ members on page 20).

A particular note of thanks to SEJ Executive Director Beth Parke, President Christy George and 2012 event co-chairman Jeff Burside for their assistance on this issue.

—Tom Gilbert, Editor



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NATIONAL NEWS

Execs End Long Runs at ABC, CNN

By Hillary Atkin

The landscape of network and cable news has shifted dramatically in recent weeks with the departures of two key executives who have set the tone and policy for their respective networks for years.

Controversy still stirs around David Westin's departure from the helm of ABC News after nearly 14 years and that of Jonathan Klein in a similar position as president of CNN/U.S. for nearly six years.

The timing of Klein's exit on Sept. 24 was particularly intriguing to news industry observers, coming as it did just before ratings-challenged CNN's launch of a new prime-time lineup he helped design, which included the shift of Piers Morgan into Larry King's chair and the launch of "Parker Spitzer."

"Jon has made important contributions to the CNN story, and he leaves with our respect and friendship and with my sincere thanks," said Jim Walton, CNN Worldwide president.

Controversial Moves

As the competition among cable news outlets escalated in recent years, and CNN's ratings declined, some of Klein's moves were considered controversial.

"Initially, Jon Klein really pushed reporters and producers to be better storytellers, and I think many of us benefited from that," said Rusty Dornin, former CNN correspondent and vice president at

NewsCertified Exchange. "But he was intent on making a handful of stars and getting rid of many CNN reporters regardless of the fact that many of them were top-notch journalists. In the last couple of years he turned up the 'tabloidization' of the network. I don't think CNN will ever be able to return to its traditional journalistic roots and the overall quality of reporting for which it was once known."

'What Took So Long?'

"The departure of Jon Klein is a surprise only in how long CNN stuck with him in the face of steadily declining ratings. I'm sympathetic to CNN's search for a middle ground between the partisan antics of Fox and MSNBC," said Bob Papper, associate chair of journalism, media studies and public relations at Hofstra University. "But survival also requires that a network find a suitably large audience for its premier news channel. That hasn't been happening. Now we'll see whether CNN seeks the easy audience in search of political validation or tries a more creative — but also more difficult — approach to bring



DAVID WESTIN



JONATHAN KLEIN

people back under the tent."

Ken Jautz moved over from HLN to replace Klein as executive VP of CNN/U.S.

"CNN has attempted to be 'middle of the road,' which many viewers unpacked as 'bland.'"

-Andrew Billings, Clemson University

"With CNN, the choice of replacement coming from Headline News seems to signal even more of a leaning toward giving CNN more of an edge," said Andrew Billings, director of the Pearce Center for Professional Communication at Clemson University. "CNN has attempted to be the 'middle of the road,' which many viewers unpacked as 'bland.' Now, it appears CNN will embrace bipartisan coverage of the news with shows such as "Parker Spitzer" — going from a perceived lack of point-of-view to two debated points of view."

Over at ABC News, Westin's tenure was marked by severe cost-cutting in recent years. In February, ABC announced it would reduce its staff by up to 400 employees, about 25 percent of its work force. Although the news division is profitable, sources at ABC said that network leadership wanted to increase the profit and that management was unhappy with Westin's efforts to accomplish that.

A 'Personal' Decision

In announcing his resignation in early September, Westin said it was a personal decision to "move on" and that he would stay on board until the end of the year to allow the network to find a replacement.

In the wake of his decision, there were unconfirmed rumblings that the real reason was that Westin had a long-running conflict with Disney chief Robert Iger.

ABC News' programs typically rank second to first-place NBC's, but lag in terms of earnings, which the Peacock network is able to maximize because of its ownership of cable properties — of which ABC has none to help support the rising costs of operating a network news division. □

NPR's Shogren Made the Trip From Russia to Radio



Elizabeth Shogren has been on the environmental beat since 2001.

Elizabeth Shogren, a Society of Environmental Journalists award winner in 2003 for her Los Angeles Times story on the Bush administration's environmental impact, began her career on another coveted beat, covering Moscow when the Soviet Union was breaking up.

After earning a bachelor's degree in Russian studies at the University of Virginia in 1985, and a master's in journalism from Columbia University in 1987, Shogren headed to Moscow, where she freelanced for Newsweek and The Washington Post, among others, covering the

fall of the Berlin wall and the peaceful revolution in Prague.

She started full-time for the Los Angeles Times in 1990, returning to the U.S. in 1993. In 2001 she moved to the environmental beat, and jumped to National Public Radio in February 2005, covering the same beat.

Shogren recently discussed the development of her career, and her shift from print to radio reporting, with *NewsPro* correspondent Elizabeth Jensen.

***NewsPro:* From the Haitian earthquake to the Gulf disaster, the environment played a major role in many recent big stories. Many reporters — not just the beat reporters — must be versed in environmental issues, and beat reporters must be more diversified. What has this meant for you? Are there turf battles?**

Shogren: Luckily, at NPR we have a lot of air time, so turf battles are not a problem. In fact, NPR did a yearlong climate change series a few years ago, with nearly the whole staff participating, and yet I had plenty to do both for the series and on other environmental topics. In recent months, I've been dedicating most of my time to covering the oil spill, and it has been a big change to be on one

big breaking story. I've enjoyed being able to dig in to the story more than I usually do.

***NewsPro:* Environmental journalism is under pressure, as publications cut back and audiences move online. Is the beat getting the coverage it deserves?**

Shogren: Of course, with newspapers in decline, many beats are not getting the coverage they used to get. I think local reporting, especially, is suffering. But there are some bright spots in environmental coverage. Some online outfits are doing really excellent reporting on a broad range of environmental issues from climate change to pollution to natural resources. And, increasingly, the general public is getting access to some of this great journalism.

***NewsPro:* In the late 1980s, the breakup of the Soviet Union was one of the coveted foreign assignments. You've gone from that hot beat to covering one of the most pressing issues of our time. How did you pull that off?**

Shogren: I have curiosity and luck to thank. My first passion was to try to understand the Soviet Union, and that led me to journalism. Since I was just starting out in journalism, and

didn't want to miss the historic changes under way in the late 1980s, I found a way to go as a freelance reporter. It turned out that I loved chronicling the massive changes under way in the former Eastern Bloc. And I was lucky that newspapers were so interested in the story that they were adding reporters to their Moscow bureaus.

Once I came back to the United States it took several years for me to find my way to the environment beat. Along the way, I covered the Clinton White House, Congress, and poverty and other social issues. I was looking for another issue to sink my teeth into when the environment beat opened up in the L.A. Times Washington Bureau. The beat suits me because every new story feels like such an adventure. The topics are so various and I always feel like I'm learning more about our world.

***NewsPro:* At the same time you moved from a contracting sector of journalism (newspapers) to a growing one (public radio). Are you prescient? What prompted the move and what were the challenges of learning a new medium?**

Shogren: I can't claim any clairvoyance. I had a classic case of mid-career itchy feet, and I

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NEWSPRO Q&A

heard NPR was looking for an environment reporter, so I threw my hat into the ring. Learning to tell stories on the radio turned out to be much more challenging for me than I expected. I soon found I was pursuing very different story ideas because characters and narrative are so important to what we do at NPR. The environment beat can be particularly challenging for radio because so often the main characters of my stories — whether they're grizzly bears or polluted air — can't talk. Also, many compelling environment stories are full of details, facts, numbers and documents. I'm still in the process of learning how to relay such stories to NPR listeners without putting them to sleep.

NewsPro: What do you like about working in radio, and what do you miss about newspapers?

Shogren: I like being able to let people present their views in their own voices. People can carry so much emotion and meaning in their voices that doesn't come through by just transcribing the words they say. I also love the way radio can bring a listener to a scene of a story, say on a boat or in a forest, by just letting the listener hear the lapping of the water on the bow or the sound of a woodpecker.

I miss all the details and numbers and nerdy facts that are much easier to include in newspaper stories than they are in radio. I also miss the relative lightness of newspaper reporting. I remember fondly the days of heading out on a story with only a notebook and pen and getting stories into print on time by dictating over a phone line from a legal pad. □

GOVERNMENT

Obama's EPA Gets Low Marks on Access to Experts

By Dinah Eng

Nearly two years into the Obama administration, some reporters say that transparency has not become a clear priority when it comes to requests for information and interviews with sources at the Environmental Protection Agency.

Monitored Interviews

While more information is posted on the agency's Web site, journalists are concerned that access to experts who can interpret the data seems spotty, and interviews, more often than not, are monitored by EPA press representatives.

"The Obama administration is less likely to put officials on the phone for interviews, is slower to provide answers to questions, and is less forthcoming with data than the Bush administration was," said Abrahm Lustgarten, environmental reporter for ProPublica. "I think there's a sense of hunkering down and trying to solve problems behind closed doors."

At the same time, he notes, the Obama administration inherited issues that are being addressed in ways that create greater openness in government

and accountability, like the decision to split the Minerals Management Service, a division of the Department of the Interior, into two parts to separate safety regulation from the collection of royalties from oil and gas companies in the wake of the BP oil spill.

"The EPA is pursuing both inventories of greenhouse gas emissions from the drilling industry and evaluating the level of other ozone pollutants from oil and gas drilling," Lustgarten said. "That had been outside the reach of state and federal governments, which is a major environmental concern."

Christy George, president of the Society of Environmental Journalists and an independent producer in Portland, Ore., said progress has been made on transparency issues with the EPA since President Obama took office.

"I give the EPA communications people a lot of credit for getting on the phone every few months to talk to a journalist from SEJ about our concerns," George said. "On the other hand, we've not made progress on what SEJ members call 'minders.' If you get an interview with a scientist, there's always someone from the press staff in the room listening in. It's a hard one to win."

George said that politics in Washington have become so polarized she understands why the press staff would want to make sure that their representatives' words don't boomerang back on the Obama administration.

She notes that different EPA regions have slightly different press practices, and when longtime reporters are well-known to scientists, interviews may be easier to come by. Political considerations are felt most strongly inside the Beltway, she said, "and that's where you find the most attempts to control the message."

Responsive Officials

SEJ has held periodic conversations with EPA press officials, and George said the officials have been very responsive. For example, EPA changed the times that press conferences were held so that West Coast reporters could be included without affecting deadlines for those in the East.

"We wrangled a bit on what was on background and what wasn't, and they changed their policy when we objected," George said. "They've also been proactive in the Web in putting information on the website, including information the Bush administration took down after 9-11."

She said environmental reporters have had transparency problems with other agencies under the administration, including the U.S. Forest Service, Food and Drug Administration and Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

"The most frequent complaint is about access to scientists," George said. "The press staff is very helpful at steering you to the right person, information or history, but when it comes to interpreting a study, there's no substitute for that scientist. I think the fear is we're likely to ask the scientist to put the impact of their study in context, and they might say something about policy that's not part of the party line."

Members of the public

"I think there's a sense of trying to solve problems behind closed doors."

-Abrahm Lustgarten, ProPublica

interest community give the Obama administration high marks for transparency, and say that the EPA is one of the leading agencies in promoting the citizen's right to know.

"On a practical level, the Obama administration is promoting the open government plan," said Gary D. Bass executive director of OMB Watch, a nonprofit research and advocacy group that promotes greater government accountability and transparency. "We were part of an effort to do an evaluation of each of the open government plans, and EPA hit not only the minimum requests that the White House put out, but did some flagship initiatives."

Slow to Move

Bass notes that the largest complaint among those in the public interest community is how slow the EPA has moved on issues like coal ash and mountaintop removal, and disclosing how science is being applied to the policy making.

"Malcolm Jackson, the new chief information officer at EPA, is still an unknown," Bass said. "We've put in two requests to meet with him, and have heard nothing from him."

Likewise, EPA officials did not respond to requests for comment on this story. □

EDUCATION

Berkeley's J-School Planning to Add Fee

By Hillary Atkin

Students at the University of California at Berkeley's graduate school of journalism are most likely in for some tuition sticker shock, to the tune of about \$5,000.

Dean Neil Henry announced in August that it was necessary to place a surcharge of that amount on the yearly tuition for students beginning their studies in 2011. The university's Board of Regents must approve or deny the hike at its November meeting.

Professional School Fees

Similar fees are charged at most professional schools at Berkeley and in the UC system — law, business, medicine, public policy, social welfare and public health. The proposed fee would not affect current first-, second- and third-year students.

Berkeley is one of only two dedicated graduate schools of journalism in the nation, the

other being at Columbia University. Other top graduate journalism programs are at Medill, USC and Stanford—all of which are private schools that compete for the same caliber of applicants.

"We are proposing this because budget cuts to the University of California have hurt our ability to provide the best program possible and keep pace with technological advances that are transforming our craft and industry," said Henry. "Every dollar of the fee above the amount set aside for student aid would support our basic classroom costs and help ensure the program's competitiveness and national leadership."

Henry said the journalism school has been forced to cut deeply into its permanent budget, with a \$150,000 permanent cut imposed last year and that he's certain the cuts will not be restored and additional ones may be imposed when the California state legislature passes a new budget.

Currently the annual basic cost at Berkeley's J-School for in-state residents is \$13,253 and \$28,559 for out of state students, who can gain residency after a year.

For comparison, the tuition at Columbia's journalism school, upon which Berkeley

was modeled when its school was founded 45 years ago, is \$46,167 for a 10-month program. Over three years with the proposed hike, the Berkeley tuition for in-state students would come to \$54,759.


'Most Logical'

"As burdensome as it may be, charging the users seems the most logical in times like this," said Bob Papper, associate chair of Journalism, Media Studies and Public Relations at Hofstra University.

"More and more state schools are simply becoming state-located, with so little state support that continued survival depends more and more on private fundraising and tuition payments," Papper said. It's a no-win situation that Berkeley is clearly attempting to deal with in fees. The attempt at discussion is commendable, but I suspect the decision has already been made — and the school probably has little choice if it's to remain competitive."

Berkeley saw a 60 percent increase in applications from 2009 to 2010. Henry said the increase is a testament to the school's distinguished faculty in leading-edge new media, broadcast, magazine, photography and documentary journalism. □

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CNN Drops an Anchor

By **Hillary Atkin**

CNN's rapid-fire axing of anchor Rick Sanchez in the wake of his controversial comments on a radio show are sure to continue to be late-night comedy fodder for weeks to come, particularly on "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart," starring comedian Jon Stewart, whom Sanchez targeted as a bigot.

Sanchez backed off on the accusation under further questioning, calling Stewart, who is Jewish, "prejudicial" and "uninformed" and espousing a "white, liberal establishment point of view," and implied Jews controlled CNN and the media and that he was discriminated against because of his ethnicity.

'A Lot Like Stewart'

"I'm telling you that everybody who runs CNN is a lot like Stewart. And a lot of people who run all the other networks are a lot like Stewart," Sanchez said. "And to imply that somehow they, the people in this country who are Jewish, are an oppressed minority? Yeah."

"I read Rick Sanchez' comments a few days ago — in total disbelief," said Bob Papper, associate chair of journalism, media studies and public relations at Hofstra University. "The fact that someone in his position would say something like that, and frequently dig himself deeper and deeper, suggests that he was really determined to justify all the negative comments that had been made about him. The only question became how long it would take CNN to end the

relationship. It didn't take long."

Sanchez hosted "Rick's List" on CNN and was known for theatrical stunts such as getting Tasered, being trapped in a sinking car, and falling off of a cruise ship — while ad-libbing what many considered banal comments in a serious tone — making him an easy target for ridicule.

"The idea that Rick Sanchez was relegated to some 'second tier' because of his Cuban heritage borders on delusional," said Jamie McIntyre, a former senior Pentagon correspondent for CNN, on his blog. "Sanchez was simply a motherlode of comedy material. And it wasn't just Jon Stewart who made fun of



RICK SANCHEZ

him. I saw a clip of CNN's Anderson Cooper and Tom Forman yucking it up replaying Sanchez's infamous Taser sequence, over and over again."

McIntyre, whose tenure at CNN stretched from 1992 to 2008, also said CNN gave Sanchez increasingly high-profile anchor assignments since his hiring in 2004, commenting: "At the same time many very talented, competent white anchors were let go — people like Miles O'Brien, Heidi Collins, Daryn Kagan."

Sanchez's controversial comments were made on the SiriusXM radio program "Stand Up! With Pete Dominick" being broadcast from CNN's Atlanta headquarters.

Dominick had previously been the warm-up talent for "The Daily Show." □



JOURNALISM TOOLS

Expert Hook Up

By **Allison J. Waldman**

If you're working on a story and need expert information, there's a new place to turn for research leads.

NewsBasis.com is a site that connects news professionals with publicists and public relations firms with a self-described mission "to transform media relations through superior technology and design to make it more effective and efficient for journalists and companies."

Relevance a Factor

Relevance is the key term that differentiates NewsBasis from other research tools, said NewsBasis CEO Darryl Siry.

"It is more valuable to be connected to fewer sources that are more highly relevant. And this is even more true for when you think about the pitch process," he said Siry was a media relations pro for more than 10 years, first at Fireman's Fund Insurance Co., where he developed a nationwide grassroots media relations program. While doing media relations for Tesla Motors, the electric vehicle

manufacturer, the idea for NewsBasis was born, he said.

"I observed some things that made me think that there was an opportunity for a new technology platform to enable media relations in a more effective and efficient way, specifically around how I wished I could promote my perspectives about issues in highly relevant ways," said Siry, who determined to make the pitch process more relevant to reporters and publishers.

Using NewsBasis is simple, according to Siry. "Journalists post requests in free-form text. We analyze the text and match the request to sources who are likely to have the most relevant expertise or be able to connect to someone with that expertise," he said.

Making the Match

NewsBasis then notifies via individual e-mail only those whom they believe have highly relevant expertise in response to the request. Those people can respond on the system without ever exchanging personal information. It's up to them to continue via the site or offline.

"We have tended to skew toward new-media folks who are more likely to have heard of us or are more comfortable with new technologies," said Siry. □

Newsmakers

Brad Adam has added play-by-play announcing to his sports anchor/reporter duties for FSN Northwest in Seattle.

Sandra Ali has joined WDIV-TV in Detroit as a reporter/fill-in anchor from WLWT-TV in Cincinnati.

Ginger Allen has been named senior investigative reporter for KTVT-TV in Dallas.

Mike Barz has joined WAWS-TV and WTEV-TV in Jacksonville, Fla., as a weekday morning anchor.

Josh Benson has joined WFTV in Orlando, Fla., as anchor/reporter from KVOA-TV in Tucson, Ariz., where he was anchor.

Mike Cameron has been renewed as weekday morning meteorologist with WNEM-TV in Saginaw, Mich.

Crystal Cruz has joined WGCL-TV in Atlanta as reporter from KMIR-TV in Palm Springs, Calif.

Linsey Davis has been promoted to a New York-based bureau correspondent at ABC from NewsOne, where she was correspondent.

Anthony DiLorenzo has joined WTIC-TV in Hartford, Conn., as an enterprise reporter from WWLP-TV in Springfield, Mass.

Nick Emmons has joined the weekday morning news crew as anchor with KION-TV in Monterey/Salinas, Calif., from KRCR-TV in Redding, Calif., where he was reporter and anchor.

Kaj Goldberg has been renewed as weekend weather anchor and general assignment reporter at KCBS-TV/KCAL-TV in Los Angeles.

John Huck has been renewed as primary weeknight anchor at KVVU-TV in Las Vegas.

Jasmine Huda has been named the co-anchor of the Sunday evening newscasts at 5:30 p.m. and 10 p.m. and "News 4 at 6:00"

Monday through Thursday at KMOV-TV in St. Louis.

Bob Irzyk has joined the KOCO-TV in Oklahoma City as sports director from KDAF-TV in Dallas.

Ryan Kath has been promoted from general assignment reporter to investigative reporter at KSHB-TV in Kansas City, Mo.

James Koh has joined KSWB-TV in San Diego as multimedia journalist from KBAK-TV in Bakersfield, Calif.

Mary Lee has joined KPRC-TV in Houston as a weekend weathercaster from KXAN-TV in Austin, Texas.

Oren Lieberman has joined the KYW-TV/WPSG-TV Eyewitness News team as a general assignment reporter from WAVY-TV in Norfolk, Va., where he was a general assignment reporter.

Britta Mervin has joined KCRA-TV in Sacramento, Calif., as weekend meteorologist from News 12 New Jersey in Edison, N.J.

Nicole Misencik has been renewed at WTHR-TV in Indianapolis as the weekend

morning and evening meteorologist.

Thomas Roberts is anchoring for MSNBC and NBC's "Early Today" on a freelance basis.

Kristina Pink has joined WGNO-TV in New Orleans as weekend sportscaster from WDBD-TV in Jackson, Miss.

Josh Rubenstein has been promoted to chief meteorologist for KCBS-TV/KCAL-TV in Los Angeles and is now morning meteorologist for the KCBS 5-7 a.m. and 11 a.m. broadcasts.

Garry Seith has been promoted to morning meteorologist at KTVT-TV in Dallas. He moves from sister station KTXA-TV, where he was primary meteorologist.

Jamie Shupak has joined NY1 News in New York as weekday morning traffic anchor and video journalist.

Hatzel Vela has joined KNXV-TV in Phoenix as multimedia journalist from WCSC-TV in Charleston, S.C., where he was reporter.

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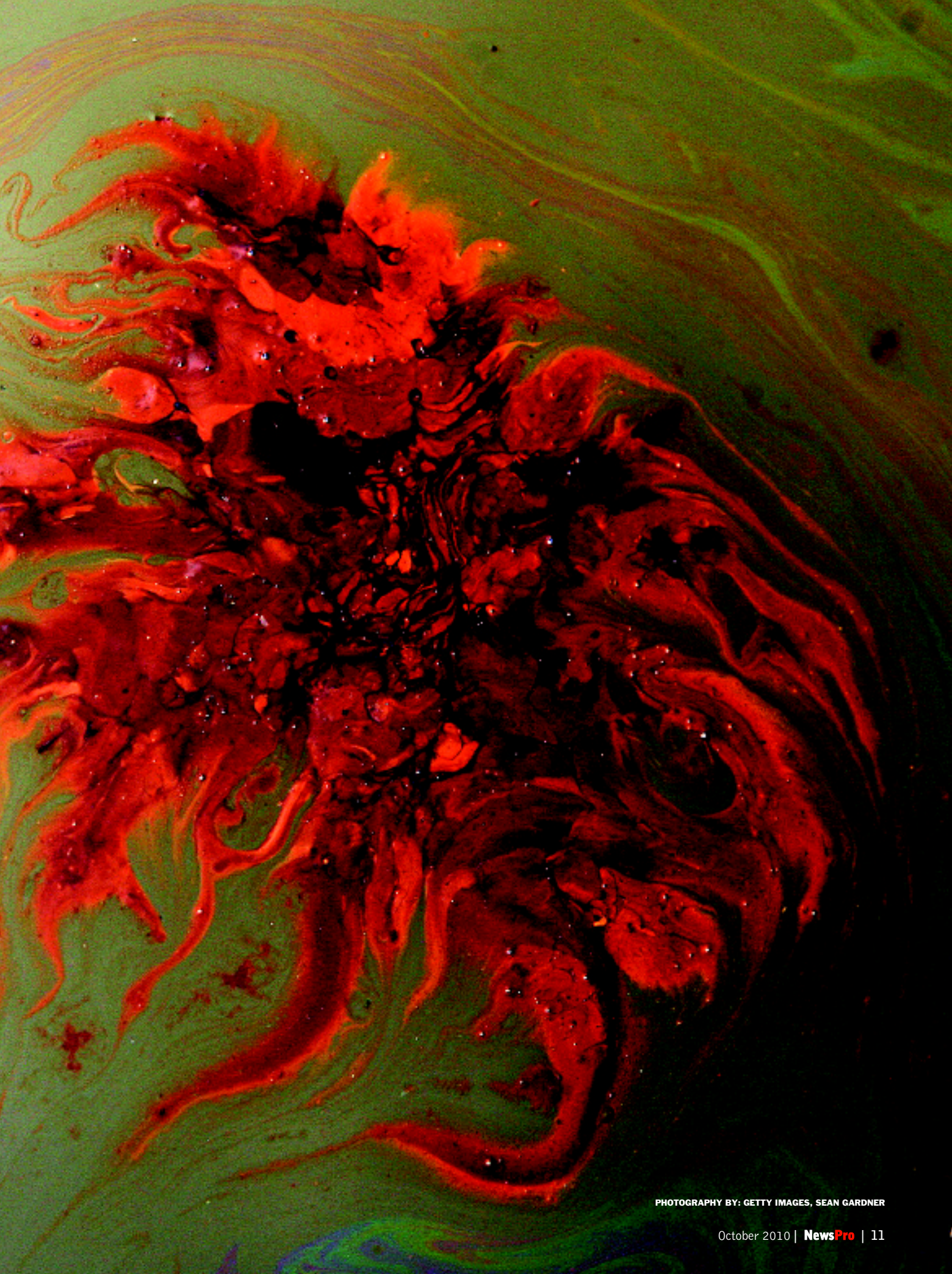
THE BIG SPILL

By Debra Kaufman

Industry Standouts Navigate a Course Plagued by the Economy,

When the Deepwater Horizon rig exploded April 20, releasing a record amount of oil into the Gulf of Mexico, it also unleashed an unprecedented amount of environmental coverage.

News outlets responded heroically to the story, even though many no longer — or never — had dedicated environmental reporters on staff.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY: GETTY IMAGES, SEAN GARDNER



NBC NEWS, FRONTED BY ANCHOR BRIAN WILLIAMS, ALLOCATED SO MANY RESOURCES TO THE GULF SPILL COVERAGE THAT SOME LOCAL STATIONS JUST WENT WITH NETWORK FEEDS.

The Gulf spill brought an acute focus to how the media covers an environmental story, with implications for every beat in the newsroom. “Show me the beat that doesn’t affect or isn’t affected by climate or environment,” said Bud Ward, editor of the Yale Forum on Climate Change & the Media. “It’s important that this issue grow away from the science section, and the niche environment beat be adopted as appropriate by reporters in other beats.”

Many Areas of Expertise

“Environmental stories aren’t just about the environment,” agrees Associated Press environmental writer Dina Cappiello, who covered the spill along with AP colleagues science writer Seth Borenstein, and writer Steve Gutkin, who was appointed as AP’s Gulf spill editor, based in Atlanta. “You need people with knowledge of the oil industry who can read SEC filings; you need people that tell the human side of the story; you need crack legal reporters because there will be a major, complex court case.”

Ward noted that the Gulf spill was plentiful in what other environmental stories have lacked: captivating photos. “It’s one of the most important stories of the year and had powerful visuals, important for TV,” he said. “The visualization is something that many other environmental stories have lacked. You can only show polar bears so many times.”

Even so, at the local TV station level, some reporters with experience in environmental reporting weren’t able to cover the story. At WTVJ-TV, an NBC O&O in Miami, reporter Jeff Burnside, who earlier had done a story on the impact of a Gulf oil spill on Florida’s shores, didn’t get a chance to make good on his earlier reporting. “I asked my editor right away [about

covering the Gulf spill] and he shrugged his shoulders and said there are already so many resources NBC has in the Gulf,” said Burnside. “He said we’d take the feed from them, unless I could find a local tie to the story.”

At the Pew Environment Group, Deputy Director of Communications Peter Dykstra worries about the lack of experienced environmental reporters covering the Gulf spill and its aftermath. “Nothing stood out to me as particularly deficient from any of the main news organizations,” he said. “I didn’t see any bad stories, but very few familiar names — people known to me because they’ve been on the beat for many years. It struck me how coverage of the environment beat is very much dependent on institutional knowledge.”

Gulf Coast Standouts

In a media environment in which nearly everyone is a general assignment reporter, covering a complicated environmental story such as the Gulf spill was more challenging than ever. Despite the dearth of environmental reporters, Christy George, president of the Society of Environmental Journalists, said media outlets geared up to cover the dominant story of the year, pointing out work by environmental reporters — at The (New Orleans) Times-Picayune (see sidebar), by Ben Raines at the Mobile (Ala.) Press-Register, and Craig Pittman at the St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times — as good examples. “They found resources,” she said. “The Gulf Coast press in six states covered it, and covered it well. TV and press did a fantastic job at connecting the two major economies of the Gulf coast — oil and fishing — and how they don’t go well together.”

George added that news outlets also did a good job in integrating the



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Times-Picayune: Slick Showing

By Debra Kaufman

The advantage of hometown media is sometimes hard to quantify, but after the Deepwater Horizon well blew on April 20, The (New Orleans) Times-Picayune team that handled the stories had the edge.

“It wasn’t just access, but how they spoke to us,” said environmental/general assignment writer Chris Kirkham. He recalls a local parish official who told him that when national media asked if he’d seen oil and he said no, they’d be disappointed. “When local reporters heard the same thing, they said, ‘That’s great,’” he said. “That encapsulated the difference.”

The Times-Picayune is no stranger to environmental coverage, having played a seminal role in covering Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. When the Deepwater Horizon rig exploded, the newspaper’s editors and journalists sprang into action. “It was [initially] covered as an accident, by whatever reporter was on at that time,” said environment reporter Mark Schleifstein. “When the rig sank into the Gulf and the spill started happening on the 23rd, it quickly became clear that it was more than a regular accident.”

That was the same day that Schleifstein was due to go on furlough for a week. Lucky for the newspaper, he had no plans and quickly turned to organizing the coverage. “One of the first things we did was set up an internal Listserv and put everyone on it who might be covering any part of the story,” he said. “Then people started feeding information to the Listserv so nothing would get lost.”

Within a few days, Schleifstein called a halt to his furlough and came into work. “By that time, we had a pretty good team of reporters who have a variety of skills,” he said. “Editorial reached out to reporters who had been covering complicated issues involving the aftermath of Katrina and moved them over to covering the spill.”

The Times-Picayune team covering the Gulf spill included former AP reporter David Hammer, who had been covering City Hall prior to the explosion; Kirkham; and two reporters from the Money/Business section — Rebecca Mowbray, who covered the legal issues, and Jaquetta White, who covered the business issues.

Hammer initially investigated what went wrong with the rig and what kinds of issues face deep-water drilling. In late June, he began focusing on the drilling moratorium and its impact on the local economy, then transitioned to following the handling of BP claims payments.

Understanding the science and engineering behind the story was a steep learning curve, said Hammer, but he noted that, unlike some news outlets, The Times-Picayune did not rotate out journalists. “Unless you take great pride in understanding as much as you can and be humble that you can’t understand it as well as someone who’s been in the industry and are willing to hear from people from all sides and processes, you won’t tell the story right,” he said.

Being local also means being committed to the outcome. “I predicted in a couple of months this will be off the front page of the national newspapers and won’t lead every newscast,” said Kirkham. “But it won’t change our focus here at The Times-Picayune. We’re in it for the long haul. We’re dedicated to being the ones who will see this story out and do our community right.” □

“This story was a wake-up call for the value of specialists on staff..”

-Dina Cappiello, AP

significant role of the wetlands. “That was a huge important lesson of Katrina that didn’t get communicated to everyone,” she said.

Journalists could also turn to online resources to make sense of the science and the many stories engendered by the spill. SEJ created the online Daily Glob, edited by Joe Davis, a compendium of daily coverage tips and resources for environmental reporters. SEJ doesn’t plan to retire the Daily Glob for some time, said George, in part as an effort to help keep the story alive after the dramatic images disappear. “All of the science isn’t in,” she said. “There is a lot we still don’t know, and I hope people don’t abandon the story.”

Andrew Revkin, blogger at Dot Earth, the New York Times’ online location for tracking environmental issues, notes how much of the Gulf spill coverage was real-time, and from unusual sources. “Carl Safina, a marine biologist and author, was in reportorial mode this summer,” he said. “Audubon magazine came out with a big package on the Gulf and they had a blogger there as well. Nola.com [the online version of the Times-Picayune] also did great work, and National Geographic has done an ongoing effort that was excellent.” Revkin also gauged the high interest of mainstream media in the Gulf spill story by the fact that he was asked to speak on numerous radio shows, including WABC-TV’s “The John Batchelor Show.”

Coverage Going Forward

Will coverage of the Gulf spill continue now that the Deepwater Horizon well is plugged? “You’ll continue to see stories coming out of the spill, but whether it’s front page news, I don’t know,” said the AP’s Cappiello, who notes that mid-term elections will discourage politicians from speaking about the nation’s oil addiction. “There is an apprehension on the part of political leaders to point the finger at the very public that’s voting for them. It’s easier to go after big oil and reform the mineral management services.”

The complexity and many angles of the Gulf oil spill was a steep learning curve even for environmental reporters. “This story was a wake-up call for the value of specialists on staff,” said Cappiello. “The technical nature of this story is extremely challenging for any reporter, and for many environmental reporters this tested their expertise as well. Just because you’ve covered the environment for a long time doesn’t make you an expert in the oil industry.”

Mid-term elections may do more than push the aftermath of the Gulf spill off the front page. SEJ’s George fears it might change the conversation altogether. The coverage’s shortcoming, she said, was “the failure to look at the larger question of energy in the U.S., and to look at renewables in a serious way.

“That got drowned out by the Washington fight,” she said. “It’s wonderful when you get a teachable moment and all the beat reporters jump in. But when you talked about energy policy, people just screamed



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about oil, and people who live on the Gulf coast didn't want the fishing or oil industries to be taken away. Then the national security angle of domestic versus foreign oil came up. But it all failed to take that last step and get into what's viable in terms of alternative energy. It stopped just short of that."

Any long-term impact on the importance of environmental journalists, however, isn't clear. Revkin said he doesn't think the upsurge in coverage of the Gulf spill will improve the status of the beat. "I could be wrong, but

environmental reporter today is an energy reporter and vice versa."

One bright spot is a National Science Foundation "rapid response" grant given to the Metcalf Institute at the University of Rhode Island, which has provided mainly marine-focused science-training programs to journalists since 1998. Executive Director Sunshine Menezes said the grant will be used to put together science training workshops about the impact of the Deepwater Horizon spill.

"Any environmental reporter today is an energy reporter."

-Bud Ward, Yale Forum on Climate Change & the Media

I don't think it's made newspapers or media organizations reassess if they need environmental reporters," he said.

The Yale Forum on Climate Change & the Media's Ward agrees, but contends that there might still be a positive impact. "It may bring awareness of the connection between energy and the environment," he said. "It may lead some readers to think longer term and more seriously about our energy future, without even realizing it's an environmental story. If there's a bumping effect it'll be more in the energy field than the environmental field. But that's not bad, because the two are so closely interrelated. Any

Oil Spill Workshops

In the immediate future, the Metcalf Institute will bring researchers working on oil spill research to SEJ's annual conference to hold several workshops. In April 2011, the Metcalf Institute will bring scientists and journalists from the Gulf region together for a seminar. And the Institute's annual science immersion workshop in June, open to journalists from all over the country, will also focus on the science being generated in the aftermath of the spill.

"We're helping the journalists understand the science being done," said Menezes. "As soon as the papers are published, there's a direct link to get the news out, accurately and quickly."

There is no guarantee that the efforts will bear fruit, as the viewing and reading public's memory of the burning Deepwater Horizon platform fades. The efforts to cover the story well and completely, and the enthusiasm of many journalists to get up to speed on the complex issues, may all be thwarted by the next colorful story, the mid-term elections and the economies of the newsroom. "Let see if the media can give it the attention it deserves," said Ward. □

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top: reclaimed coal mine land in Campbell County, Wyoming.

above: a woman collects samples to test for water quality at a Nevada gold mine.

SEJ Takes a Trip West

Group to Study Impact of Climate Change on the High Rockies

By Debra Kaufman

Climate change is hitting the country hardest in the West, according to research by the Natural Resources Defense Council, among others, and the 20th anniversary conference of the Society of Environmental Journalists, being held in Missoula, Mont., Oct. 13 to 17, will explore the consequences.

Each SEJ conference is a mini crash course in a specific environmental issue, depending on the conference locale. One element that made host University of Montana-Missoula, so attractive this year was the chance for attendees to observe firsthand how climate change is affecting the West and the High Rockies, said Jay Letto, SEJ's conference director.

"It's a place that's getting noticeable impact from climate change earlier than others," he said, from the receding ice at Glacier National Park to the swaths of forest killed off by the pine beetles that now thrive as winters are warmer.

Both phenomena will be topics of the popular Thursday day tours that precede the conference's Friday opening plenary session, which will explore how climate change is affecting the Western region. Nobel laureate Steve Running, a University of Montana climate scientist who is director of the Numerical Terradynamics Simulation Group, will be the featured speaker at the plenary. Other panelists will include Western historian Charles Wilkinson; Rebecca Miles, executive director of the Nez Pierce tribe and a leading voice on Native American tribal sovereignty; regional forester Leslie Weldon from the U.S. Forest Service; and Dick Kempthorne, former Idaho governor and former U.S. secretary of the interior in the George W. Bush administration.

While the West is the focus of the gathering — with other plenaries on the future of the national parks and the competing interests of humans and large predators such as grizzly bears and wolves — organizers couldn't ignore the major environmental story that many of its members have been writing about, the Gulf oil spill, said Beth Parke, SEJ's executive director, adding, "We try to be on top of the biggest stories of the year."

The April 20 Deepwater Horizon drilling rig explosion happened after the agenda had largely been mapped out, but Letto said two of the plenary sessions and some smaller sessions were retooled to address the spill.

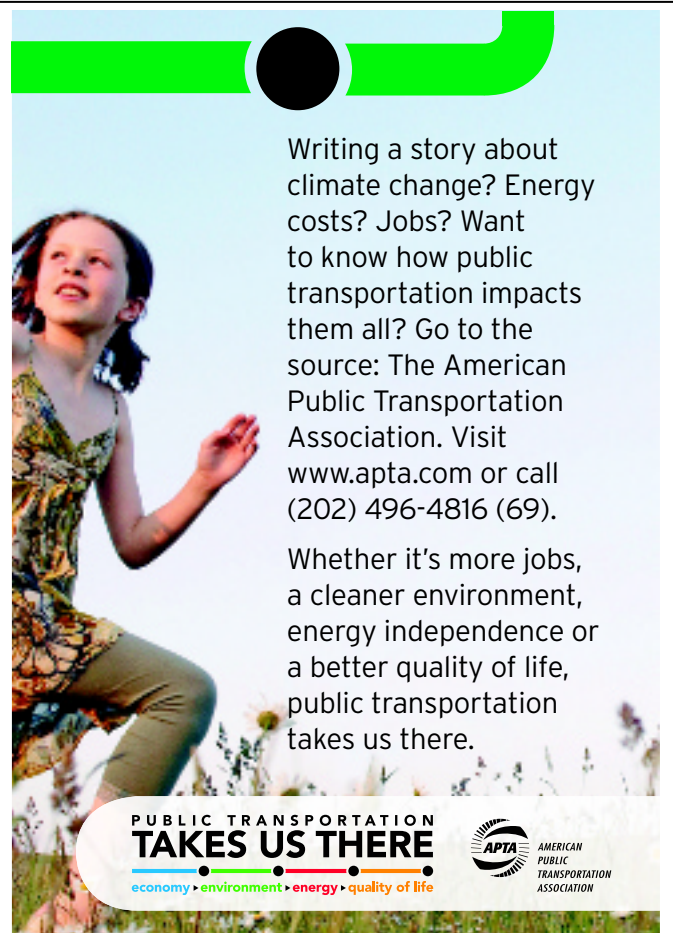
Gulf Spill Panel

Friday afternoon's plenary will explore "Lessons From the Gulf," with Jane Lubchenco, administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and Tom Strickland, the assistant secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks and chief of staff for Interior Secretary Ken Salazar. Elgie Holstein from the Environmental Defense Fund will be on the panel, as well, as will a representative from the oil drilling industry. Three-time Pulitzer winner Mark Schleifstein from The (New Orleans) Times-Picayune will moderate.

Saturday's lunch plenary will examine the Obama administration's energy policy in the wake of what happened in the Gulf. Nancy Sutley, the chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality will represent the administration on the panel.

This year's attendance is expected to run about equal to last year's 800, said Letto. "In an era when other journalism groups are abbreviating their conferences and even canceling them, ours are thriving," he said, attributing the steadiness partly to the numerous conference programs geared to freelancers and journalists looking to add new skills.

Back this year is the popular freelance pitch slam, where freelancers have 60 seconds to pitch a panel of editors their ideas. "Editors are



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interested in this marketplace type of approach; they appreciate hearing from different talent,” said Parke, “and writers get a chance to get feedback.”

Would-be journalism entrepreneurs get their own pitch fest, as well, as do would-be authors, who will have two minutes to pitch editors on their book ideas. There’s also another of SEJ’s extremely popular all-day video training sessions on Wednesday and a program on website building. Programs on environmental law and crowdsourcing environmental news are also expected to be popular, Parke said.

Tribal Lands Tour

As in recent years, most of SEJ’s daylong tours are expected to be sold out. The bus to Glacier National Park filled up months ago, Letto said, despite the six-hour round-trip drive time. Among the unique tours this year is a small-group fly-fishing tour and a trip to the Flathead Indian Reservation to explore issues related to the intersection of traditional culture and natural resource management. It’s the first time SEJ has arranged a tour to tribal lands.

Among the other highlights of this year’s gathering is a special project that will bring a group of journalists from the European Union to join the conference for a few days to discuss issues of mutual interest, Letto said. And to mark its 20th anniversary, SEJ is bringing out many of its founding board members, said Letto, himself a co-founder of the organization, as well as some surprise VIPs who are expected to attend the closing party.

Next year’s event, hosted by the University of Miami, will take place Oct. 19 to 23. The 2012 meet will be held at Texas Tech in Lubbock. □



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Issues That Matter Most

Climate Change and Low Wages Top SEJ Members' Concerns In This Year's NewsPro Survey

By *Hillary Atkin*

Contending with dwindling resources is a challenge in any organization, but it is particularly acute for environmental journalists, according to a new study conducted by NewsPro in conjunction with the Society of Environmental Journalists on the eve of the organization's 20th conference.

The poll questioned the organization's members about a variety of

issues pertaining to their jobs covering environmental issues.

Boiling It Down

Among its key findings:

- SEJ Members feel global climate change is the most important story they'll be covering in the next few years.
- They see the increased awareness about green issues as the most positive environmental trend in the United States.
- They say having to utilize multimedia as a job requirement is the biggest change in the past five years.

More than 100 people answered the questions. In responding to a query about the biggest challenges facing them as journalists covering environmental issues, 38.2 percent said it was resources at their respective news organizations; 23.5 percent said job security; 17.6 percent said priority among news topics covered by their news organizations; and just 2 percent said reader controversy over environmental hot-button issues. Reflecting the ongoing changes in the journalism workplace, a substantial number of respondents preferred answers of their own, with 18.6 percent choosing "other."

"Once again, the survey questions seem to assume that I/we/most enviro journalists have a 'news organization.' I don't, and neither do most of my peers," said the anonymous respondent. "The biggest challenge I have is finding outlets that are interested in freelance environmental journalism at a pay rate that equates to a livable wage."

Others chimed in with similar comments such as, "A lack of news organizations willing to pay freelance journalists a decent wage to do the research, interviewing and writing involved in preparing a good story" and "I am a freelancer — so, for me, it is the continual challenge of making enough money."

Important Stories

In answering the question "What do you view as the most important environmental story over the next several years?" 36.5 percent said global climate change; 25 percent went with renewable energy and energy policy; 15.4 percent said fresh water issues; nearly 6 percent said agriculture and food systems; and about 4 percent replied that recovery and restoration from environmental disasters would be the biggest topic in the near future.

There was not an "all of the above" answer, but some of those

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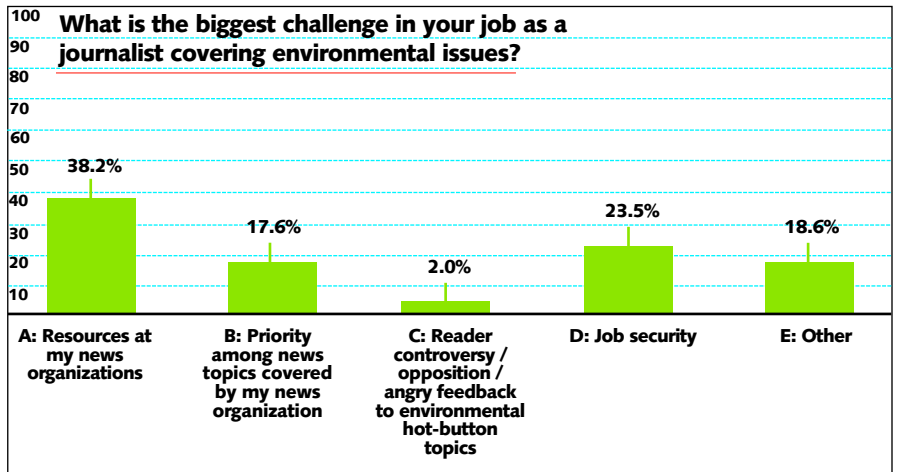
responding to the question said there should be.

“These issues are linked; all are to some degree driven by climate change. In that sense, climate change remains the most important story, but I doubt that it’s going to get the most ink,” said one environmental journalist. “My guess: disaster coverage will dominate for the next few years, gradually yielding to coverage of energy policy. It looks like it’s going to take a few more disasters for the country and world to finally come to grips with that issue.”

Climate Change Central

“Other issues are very important, but climate change overshadows everything else because of its potential to turn the world upside down,” said SEJ President Christy George. “And it exacerbates all the other problems. Fresh water is a huge threat, but climate change could make that worse by imposing droughts in many parts of the world that are already water-short. Energy policy has been a top issue for decades, but climate change puts it even more on the front burner, since it’s fossil fuels like oil, gas and coal that drive the changing climate.”

Responding to a query about what they thought were the most promising environmental trends in the United States, more than 33 percent said that it was the general raised consciousness about the



“Climate change [dominates] because of its potential to turn the world upside down.”

-Christy George, SEJ

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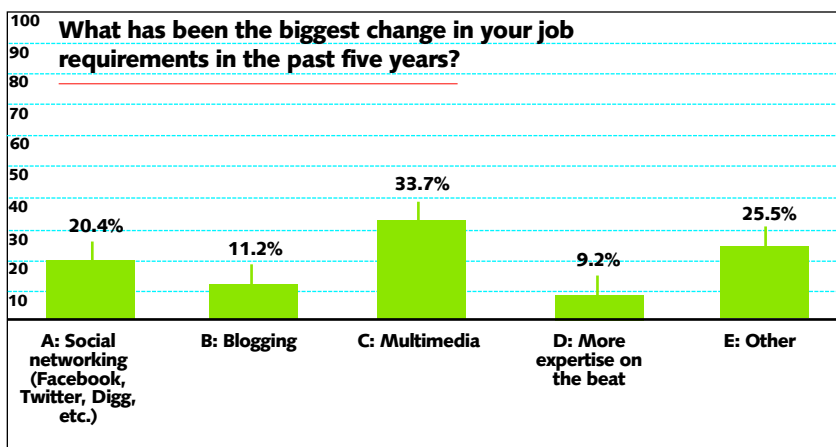
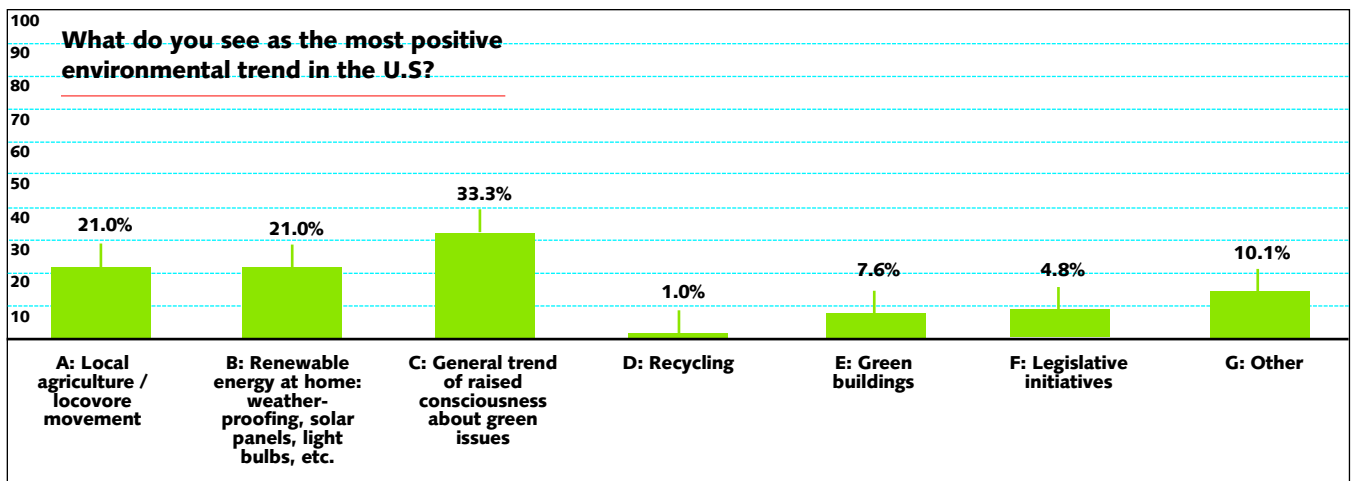
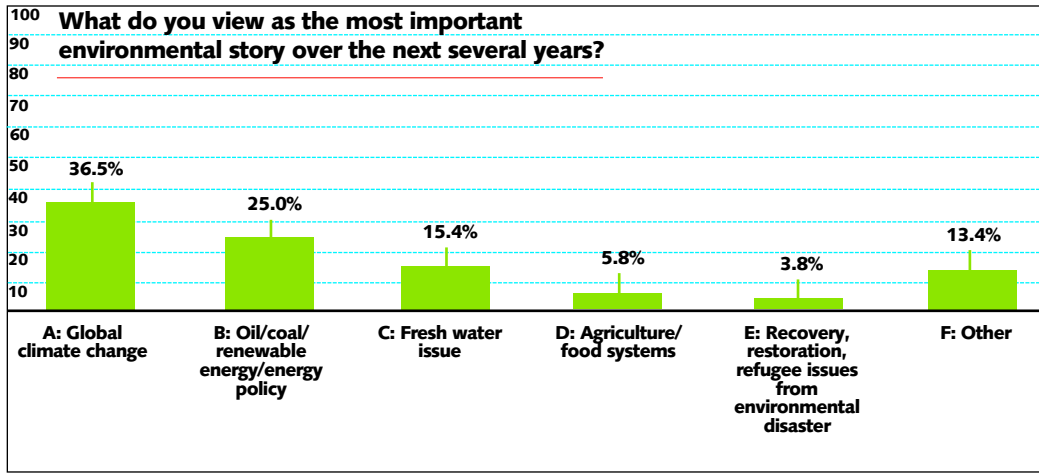
environment; 21 percent thought that it was the local agriculture/locovore movement; an equal 21 percent said it was renewable energy at home, such as solar panels, weatherproofing and energy-efficient light bulbs; and about 14 percent of the answers were spread out among recycling, green buildings and legislative initiatives.

Other responses to the question included California's continued

testament to the good work of environmental journalists, despite the crisis in the news business," George said. "Even when SEJ members are laid off, bought out, downsized and reassigned, they still find creative ways to stay on the beat, whether it's starting their own online news outlet, or looking for ways to cover environment stories that collide with business, politics or whatever else they're covering. I should

add, though, that a lot of people answered 'none.'

When asked about the biggest changes in their job requirements over the past five years, 33.7 percent said multimedia; more than 20 percent answered social networking; and 25.5 percent said "other" with answers like "doing more with less," "less space on the page," "finding my own resources and surviving off a



smaller paycheck" and "transitioning from staff to freelance."

More than 11 percent said it was having to blog in addition to their other duties, and 9.2 percent responded that it was having more expertise on the beat.

More for Less Continues

George noted that TV reporters are being asked to blog, tweet and produce an audio piece in the same amount of time once reserved just for producing a television piece. At the same time, she has heard from many print reporters that they find it very exciting to learn audio and video.

leadership on energy and the environment, increased interest in reducing meat consumption, the recession and breakthroughs in energy technologies.

"If the public is becoming aware of environmental issues, it's a

"The comments reveal a journalistic universe where everyone is being asked to do more for less, at a time when the economy may have bottomed out but remains stubbornly on the bottom, and while the environmental issues facing the planet grow ever more serious," she said. □



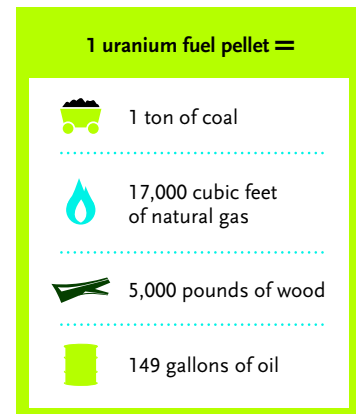
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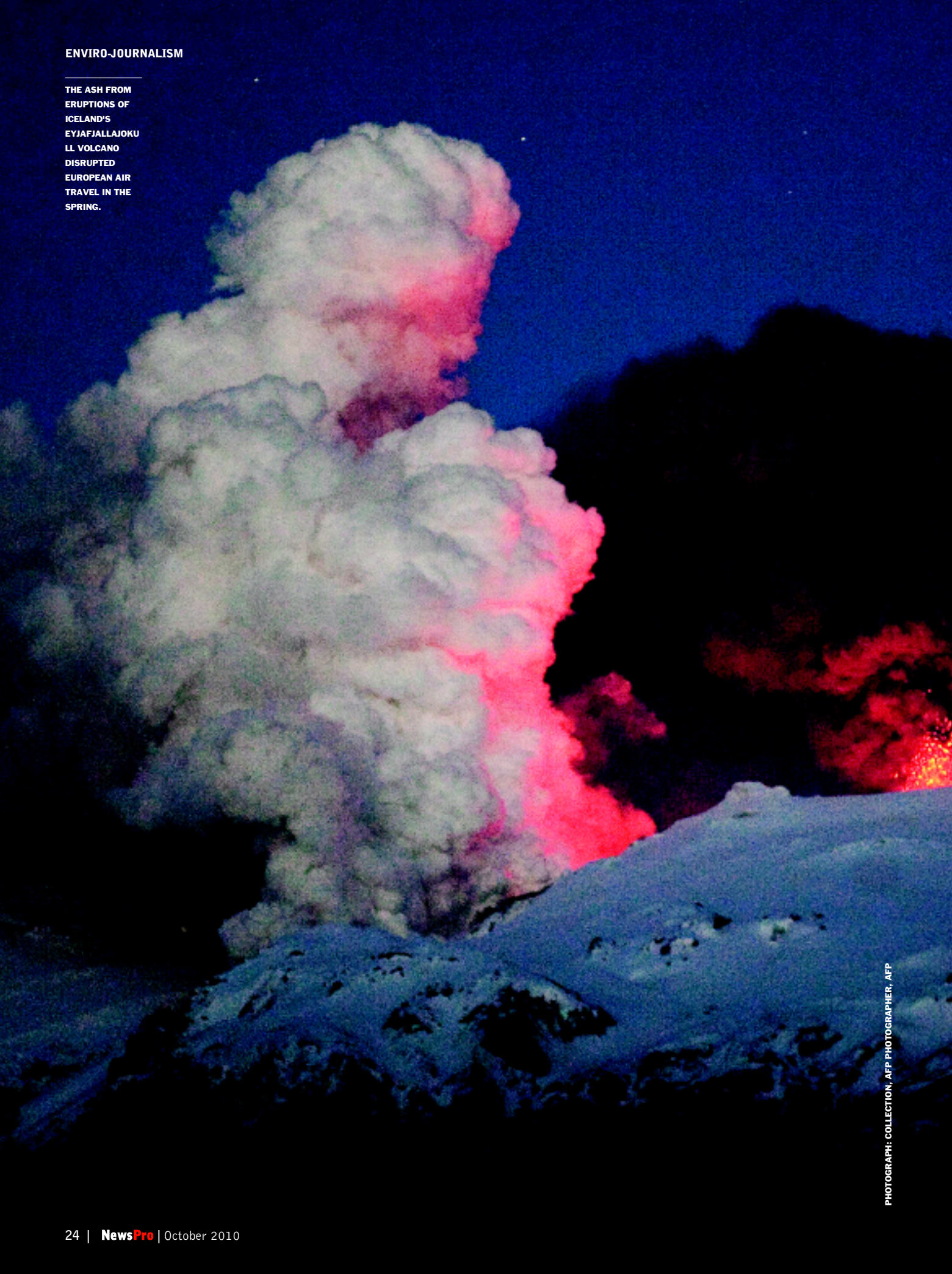
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Where There's Smoke

2010 Was the Year Environmental Stories Seized the Media Spotlight

By Debra Kaufman

An astonishing number of breaking stories so far in 2010 were about the environment. TV viewers and newspaper readers were bombarded by dramatic pictures and accounts of the environment run amok, from the coal ash spill in West Virginia; the plume of volcanic ash over Europe; mine disasters in West Virginia, Chile and China; floods in Pakistan; the natural gas explosion in northern California; and, of course, the oil refinery explosions in Texas and the Gulf of Mexico.

"There were a series of events that focused us on the costs of our fossil fuel use," said Dina Cappiello, who covers the environment for Associated Press' national desk in Washington. "This was a year where the environmental stories were hard to ignore because they were in your face."

How ironic that the year has also seen the continuing decimation of dedicated environmental reporters in newsrooms across the nation, a fact not lost on the Society of Environmental Journalists. SEJ

President Christy George, who was laid off from her job at Oregon Public Broadcasting, reports that "environmental reporters, in general, have lost their jobs."

General Assignment or Freelance

"Many reporters with environmental beats who are still employed have been reassigned to the general assignment beat, and slip in environmental coverage when they can," she said. "And we see that people have gone freelance and continue to cover the beat if they can pull it off."

Jeff Burnside, who formerly focused on the environment at NBC O&O WTVJ-TV in Miami, is one of those reporters. "Like most reporters, I have the desire to cover environmental stories, but the economic realities mean that I do an environmental story maybe once a week," he said. Instead, he seeks out stories that will play well, while also intersecting with an environmental theme.



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FREIGHT RAIL WORKS

According to Bud Ward, editor of the Yale Forum on Climate Change & the Media, more than half of the Society of Environmental Journalists' membership is now made up of freelancers. In fact, he questions that the word "journalists" in the organization's title is even relevant anymore. "It may be that the 'journalism' part of SEJ is as much an endangered element as the environmental part," he said.

The Rise of Online

As traditional media eliminate environmental beats and reporters, online resources of journalism become more significant. The Climate Desk (climatedesk.org), for example — a collaboration of The Atlantic, Center for Investigative Reporting, Grist, Mother Jones, Slate, Wired and PBS public affairs show "Need to Know" — brainstorms, assigns and shares coverage of climate change and its human, environmental, economic and political impact. Climate Central (climatecentral.org) is a nonprofit model similar to ProPublica, in which a group of scientists and science journalists produce science-based stories they disseminate to the press.

Former New York Times environmental reporter Andrew Revkin is now blogging on the Times' Dot Earth about "relevant developments from suburbia to Siberia."

"Conventional media are a shrinking part of communications," said Revkin. "In terms of where people get their news, it could be online, a compelling YouTube video. Conventional media still has great

power to do investigative work, but in terms of keeping people apprised of what's going on in the Gulf, for example, there's a much broader palette of sources."

DailyClimate.org, a daily e-mail newsletter published by Environmental Health Sciences — a global nonprofit media company with headquarters in Charlottesville, Va., that aggregates news and science on climate change — is another source of information. Editor Douglas Fischer, a former environmental print reporter, believes that climate change is "increasingly understood by reporters."

"I was surprised at the number of people who made the connection between the fires in Russia, the floods in Pakistan, and events we might expect to see as we put more carbon in the atmosphere," he said. "Reporters feel more comfortable connecting those dots."

Other tools for reporters covering environmental stories include Sky Truth, a nonprofit research group that collects and disseminates NASA satellite images, including recent images of the Gulf spill. "This was a new tool that was introduced that really helped reporters," said Peter Dykstra, deputy director of communications for the Pew Environment Group. "They took this critical bit of information and made it available to news organizations that couldn't have gotten it on their own."

But, after the Gulf spill, will coverage of the environment continue to enjoy a bump? SEJ's George is encouraged by the current appetite for environmentally themed shows on cable TV channels such as Animal Planet's new "Blood Dolphins," from Ric O'Barry, director of the documentary "The Cove." "They're entertainment shows but there's a lot of science and environmental science being communicated through those shows," she said. "That's an interesting trend."

A Broad Swath

Burnside hopes that some organization would "build a case that shows that viewers care about environmental stories."

"If they asked if people cared about health issues and the environment, beach closures, sewage rates, seafood — those issues would score very, very high," he said. "And it's incumbent on reporters to remind management that these are environmental stories. From drought to air pollution, illegal dumping and seafood, we cover a shocking number of environmental stories routinely. We just don't realize it."

The next year will show if news organizations will continue coverage of the issues raised by the Gulf spill and other environment-related stories. Dykstra, for one, has a wait-and-see attitude. "It's inevitable that the environment as a focus story tends to wax and wane," he said. "There's a tendency to pay less attention when the economy is in bad shape, and that's a time like now." □

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

A 2006 United Nations report claims that "livestock are responsible for 18 percent of greenhouse gases, a bigger share than ... transport."



The UN has acknowledged the significant error in this claim. According to the EPA, the U.S. livestock sector's contribution to GHG emissions is around 3 percent, magnitudes less than the transportation sector.

What are the real facts on meat and poultry production and the environment? Check www.sustainablemeatindustry.org or AMI's fact sheet on animal agriculture and the environment @ www.meatami.com/ghg. contact: dray@meatami.com.



Environmental Coverage: It Takes a Team

By Debra Kaufman

As newsrooms at TV stations and print publications shed environmental and other specialized beat reporters, the team approach to covering complex environmental stories has become more important than ever.

And also more apt. “The team approach is healthy and constructive,” said Bud Ward, editor of the Yale Forum on Climate Change & the Media. “You’ll see more team reporting, especially as it goes past the capabilities of the general assignment reporter.”

Ward said the coverage he saw of the Gulf oil spill was generally excellent. He singles out the work that Anderson Cooper did on CNN. “He was down there daily for weeks on end,” he said. Society of Environmental Journalists President Christy George also praises the multifaceted coverage of news outlets in all six affected Gulf states, pointing out The (New Orleans) Times-Picayune, the Mobile (Ala.) Press-Register and the St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times.

Associated Press made a full-court press, with writer Steve Gutkin appointed as AP’s Gulf spill editor, and environmental writer Dina Cappiello and science writer Seth Borenstein dedicated

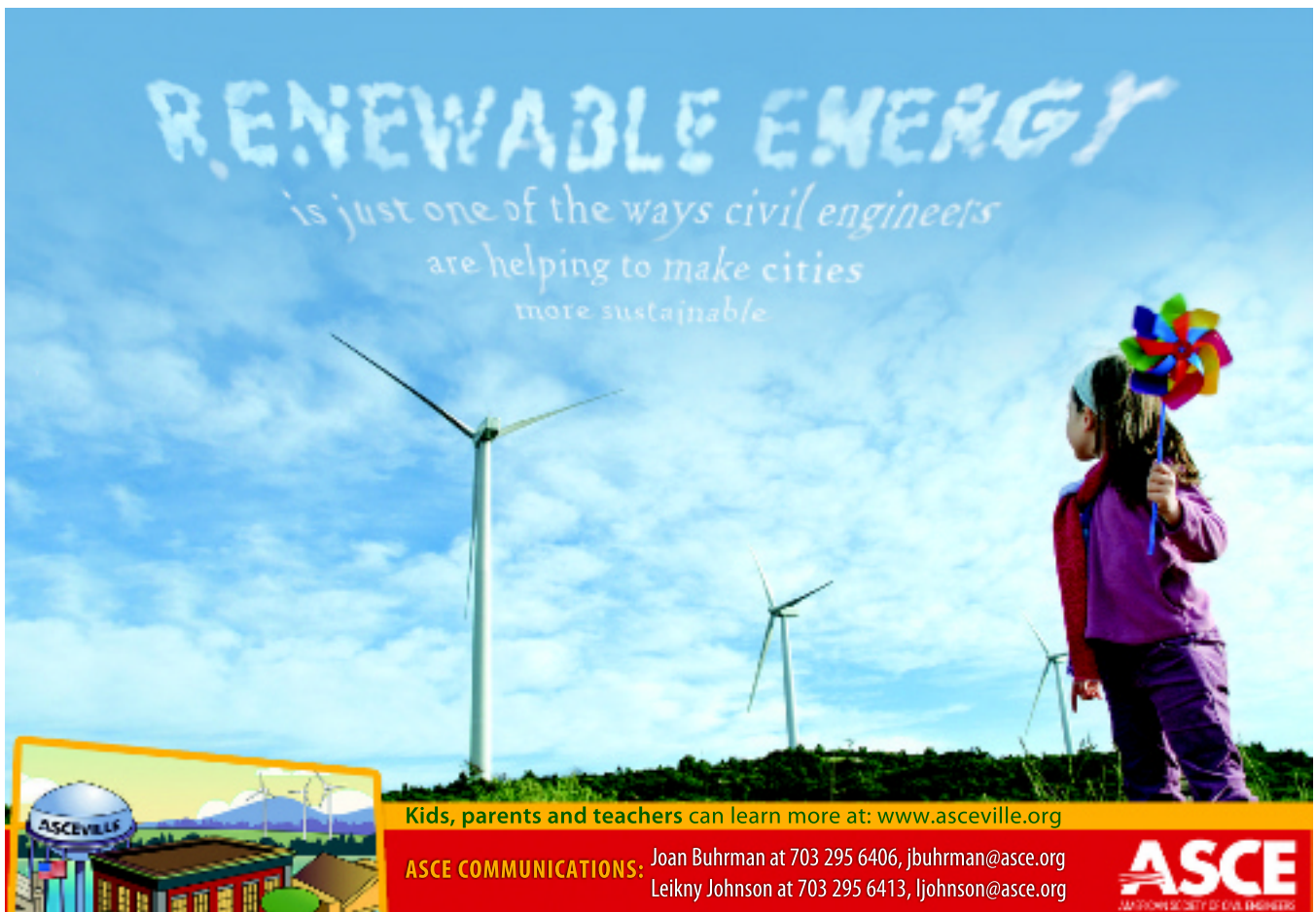
to the story. Ward noted that AP has made a commitment to staying on top of the Gulf spill story for another year. “If they do, it’s important and notable,” he said. “Right now, it’s a plan and a promise. Let’s see if it takes place.”

One place that TV stations in particular are looking for people to help cover environmental stories is in the weather department. Ward notes that CNN used meteorologists as breaking-news reporters on the Gulf spill, as did other networks.

Ward said the American Meteorological Society is trying to position TV weathercasters as the station scientist. “That person becomes the go-to person, not just for the weather and climate but science-related stories at certain stations,” he said. “And that’s a big chunk of work. The weather person is busy as it is. But then you want them to study lakes one week and glaciers the next. They become the go-to person on a whole range of science issues.”

The future team covering environmental issues will also include print reporters lugging video cameras. George points to Robert McClure, a former Seattle Post-Intelligencer writer who now writes and shoots for InvestigateWest, and Laura Frank, now director at Rocky Mountain Investigative News Network.

“The bleeding has stopped enough for newspapers to ask how to stay alive” she said. “The answer is they need to put video and audio on their websites.” □



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ORGANIZATIONS LIKE PROPUBLICA ARE PIONEERING JOURNALISM MODELS FOR INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING.

Independents' Day

Specialty Organizations Fill the Void Left by the Streamlining of Big Media

By Dinah Eng

As traditional media outlets downsize, often cutting back on specialty reporting beats, independent news services have risen to keep readers and viewers informed on environmental issues.

Organizations such as ProPublica, InvestigateWest, Voice of San Diego and others are pioneering journalism models for independent investigative reporting. Many are nonprofit online or multimedia operations run by traditional journalists with foundation backing.

Environmental reporters who have joined their ranks say these new outlets allow them to do their jobs with greater flexibility in choosing topics and determining the length of time spent on the reporting.

"The big difference is having the time to report in great depth without an artificial deadline to produce a story, no matter what information I find," said Abraham Lustgarten, environmental reporter for ProPublica, an independent newsroom funded by the Sandler Foundation and other philanthropic donors. "You have an opportunity to communicate substantively and deeply about topics."

Lustgarten has written stories on natural gas drilling in the United States and its effect on the country's water supply, and covered the BP oil spill extensively.

"The fact that we're a nonprofit isn't relevant, in terms of the quality of the stories that we do," Lustgarten said. "Readers can look at our track record and background the same as they can look at The Wall Street Journal or The Washington Post."

When the Hearst Corp. announced that the Seattle Post-Intelligencer was for sale in January 2009, a group of reporters began to talk about forming a nonprofit news operation to preserve their reporting. As time went by, some found jobs or transitioned out of journalism, but a core group of investigative journalists went on to make their dream a reality.

"We were down to five or six people, all unemployed," said Robert McClure, former environmental reporter for the Post-Intelligencer. "I was the first one to throw in definitely. I refinanced my house, and every week people would check in. I worked 14 months before getting a paycheck."

Initially, InvestigateWest did aggregation of stories and blog postings on the environment, public health and social justice issues. Today, McClure is senior environmental correspondent for the journalism studio that focuses on those issues in the Pacific Northwest and the West.

Purveyors of Content

Along with InvestigateWest colleagues Rita Hibbard, executive director and editor, and Carol Smith, senior writer, McClure produces stories in a multimedia format and places them with partners like MSNBC and The Seattle Times, who pay for the content.

"We've received major grants that have allowed us to pay salaries to the core team, plus a half dozen journalists and two photographers," McClure said. "We've appealed for members to support us, with contributions of \$60 a year or more. You have to make sure the grants keep coming in."

McClure said InvestigateWest is looking for ways to bring in additional revenue, and has taken on projects such as doing research on environmental issues for a local foundation.

"We are trying to build a community of people who will get involved with the issues and do something about the journalism we produce," McClure said. "This is all an experiment. We're trying to build a business model that will work."

With new journalism initiatives on the rise, new sources of funding also come into play. Discerning readers and viewers must now judge for themselves whether a conflict of interest exists in coverage.

Hardy Spire, formerly a senior producer at CBS News, is now vice

president of news operations at CleanSkies TV Network, an independent news outlet that produces a weekly TV show and Web site on energy and environmental issues.

Established three years ago, CleanSkies is sponsored by the American Clean Skies Foundation. The foundation's primary sponsor is Chesapeake Energy, the second-largest producer of natural gas in the United States.

"Chesapeake Energy thought mainstream media was not paying attention to the subject," Spire said. "CleanSkies TV was created as an unbiased, one-subject news organization to report on stories about energy and the environment. I came on board two years ago to organize the news organization."

Spire said CleanSkies TV has a charter document of incorporation that guarantees its editorial independence, stipulating that the American Clean Skies Foundation will have no interaction with the content that the network produces, even though the foundation's money funds what is produced.

"There will be an ombudsman who will act as a firewall between us and the foundation to settle any concerns about editorial independence," Spire said. "We're also disclosing the backgrounds of guests and commentators. Any time we've done a natural gas story involving Chesapeake Energy, we've disclosed where our money comes from."

On Oct. 3, the network will relaunch with a new half-hour Sunday show on Washington's WJLA-TV called "Energy Now!" and a redesigned Web site (energynow.com) with new material and contributors.

"It'll be more like a magazine program with discussion, debate and analysis," said Andrew Heyward, former president of CBS News who is

serving as a consultant on the relaunch. "I think if we do it right this will be a real service to the public because even big networks can't afford to spend the time on energy issues.

"I'm very interested in new models for news and information. You're going to find more nontraditional entities funding traditional journalism, and one of them is foundations. It needs to be done well, and they need full disclosure so viewers will know who's paying for it."

No More Gatekeeper

Technological advances are also changing the way news is distributed, allowing more content providers direct access to consumers without a traditional media outlet serving as the gatekeeper.

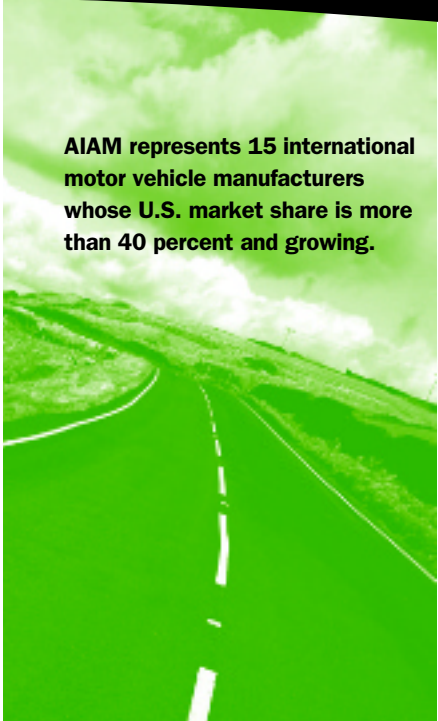
Last spring, Publish2 launched News Exchange, a product that allows any news organization to exchange information with any other news organization, and allows freelancers to create newswires that

"You're going to find more nontraditional entities funding journalism."

-Andrew Heyward, consultant

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customers can easily access. In addition, the company offers Link Newswire, which allows news organizations to easily share news links by connecting their publishing systems.

More Options

"A newspaper that needs to fill a news hole with nonlocal reporting could get as many different sources as possible through us," said Scott Karp, CEO and co-founder of Publish2. "We'd love to see more environmental news sources come into our system. News has been distributed in a controlled, fixed way for a long time, and we want to open it up."

While traditional media outlets may not see environmental news as a niche market worth pursuing, E&E Publishing has made a profitable business out of covering energy and environmental issues for more than a decade.

"We're not a consumer-oriented publication," explains Kevin Braun, editor-in-chief, who founded the company with business partner Michael Witt after buying a weekly publication in 1998 that they had managed for the nonprofit Environmental and Energy Study Institute. "We bought out the think tank arm of the publication and are a specialized online information service (Environment & Energy Daily) that provides information to energy and environmental professionals."

Former Newspaper Staffers

E&E's target audience includes environmental advocacy groups, industries with ties to the environment and energy, and federal and state policymakers. Most of the company's 45 reporters come from newspapers that have cut back on editorial staff.

The company also runs Greenwire, E&ENewsPM, E&ETV, ClimateWire and Land Letter.

"We have an effect within the Beltway on the policy debate," Braun said. "We do a lot of ground-truthing, as to whether ideas are seen as good by experts, or if they're just serving special interests. We concentrate on the legislative process, anything that seems important on the energy and environmental front on a global basis, and climate issues."

About 40,000 authorized readers use E&E publications online, and in a partnership with The New York Times, 10 E&E stories from Greenwire and ClimateWire run daily on that newspaper's Energy & Environment Page and show up on Google News, giving the company wider distribution, even if no revenue is generated from the pass-along readership.

"Our business, as a whole, is profitable," Braun said. "We wanted to operate separately from the nonprofit (Environmental and Energy Study Institute), so purchased the trademark, printing equipment, subscriber list and electronic files. We don't pretend to be a replacement for mass market energy and environmental coverage. But we have more influence on the policy debate than a story in most newspapers." □

The Struggle for Survival

Journalists Adapt to Jobs Crisis in Myriad Ways

By Elizabeth Jensen

Bruce Ritchie spent the morning of Dec. 2, 2008, at a waste sorting facility for a story he was writing about recycling for his employer, the Tallahassee Democrat, then he went to the office, where he learned he was being laid off. Then he went to a Florida environmental protection workshop he had already planned to cover.

It was, he says, "a crucial moment. I thought, I could curl up in a fetal position, or open a bottle of something. But I thought, 'No, I'm still a reporter.'" The same day, he says, he started FloridaEnvironments.com, a website dedicated to statewide environmental news.

As big news organizations contract, the environmental beat reporters are among those being let go. While some drift off to academia or public relations or nonprofits, many others have turned to freelance, or reinvented themselves online, or cobbled together a bit of both. Not without struggle, but some of them are finding ways to continue covering the stories that matter to them, sometimes by selling them to receptive news organizations also struggling with fewer resources.

The Society of Environmental Journalists' membership numbers tell the story of the changing field. Membership is up this year, compared with 2008, growing to 1,456 members from 1,409 members in June 2008 (although off from a peak of 1,531 in August 2009). But where those members come from has changed markedly. TV members are down 61 percent in the past two years, and those who write for daily newspapers are down 23 percent. Print magazine members have dropped 19 percent. Calculated another way, in 2004, 32 percent of SEJ members worked at daily newspapers (440 out of a total 1,387). In July of this year, the number was 17 percent (244 out of 1,456).

Meanwhile, members who say they work in online media shot up by 118 percent, and self-identified freelancers (any medium) were up by 9 percent. Student and faculty membership also grew.

Sticking With the Beat

As SEJ noted in a recent grant proposal, "Most of the top environmental journalists who lost good jobs have stayed in the field as freelancers, authors, teachers and entrepreneurs, albeit in a diminished capacity."

"People are sticking with it, trying to apply their knowledge base to continue to serve as environmental journalists," SEJ Executive Director Beth Parke said.

Ritchie, after starting his website, picked up full-time work this year with the Florida Tribune, another online venture that covers public policy and politics in the state; he contributes environmental coverage. But the income isn't what it was, he said. His wife has a job, with benefits, "and I have been scraping by. If I were on my own I don't know what I'd do; I don't think I'd qualify as making a living."

The work, however, has often been satisfying, he said. At the Tallahassee Democrat, after eight years covering growth and the

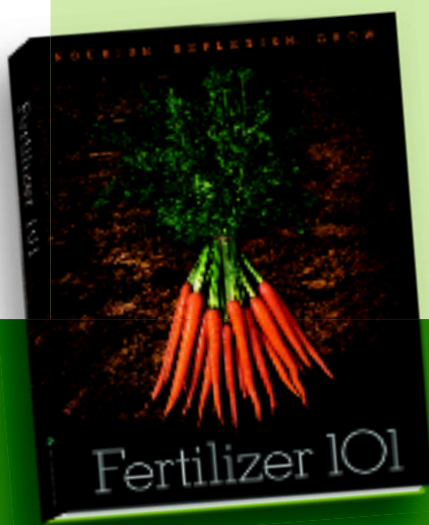
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book and accompanying www.fertilizer101.org Web site. All SEJ conference participants are eligible for a complimentary copy of the *Fertilizer 101* book.



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environment, he was bumped around in his last year as beats were eliminated and changed. But, he noted, “You can eliminate the environmental beat if you want, but you don’t eliminate the environmental issue.” The difference, he said, is that stories don’t get covered consistently.

Now, he said, he is covering stories with a statewide view, and “approaching this beat the way it should have been covered all along.”

Robert McClure, an SEJ board member, and his colleagues began laying plans for the nonprofit online startup InvestigateWest even before his employer, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, closed in December of last year.

His wife calls them “freelancers on steroids,” he said, of the unusual model. The organization, which focuses on the Pacific Northwest, produces in-depth stories for other news organizations — such as MSNBC, the local Seattle television stations and the Seattle Times — for a fee. Topics have included toxic parking lot sealants and cruise ship waste dumping. Overall, in journalism, he said, “There’s a lot more collaboration in the air now, and that has made it much easier for us.”

The news outlets like the arrangement, he said, because they “pay the regular freelance rate for what is actually in-depth reporting.” Foundations and individual donors also support the site, whose staff members were on unemployment — volunteering their time at the nonprofit — until June, when the three key staffers began drawing a salary. McClure said he believes the site is sustainable, although he wishes the staff were larger; there are also freelancers who are paid.

“We’re trying to keep alive in-depth journalism while the whole business shakes out,” he said.

Increased Impact

The ability to focus on in-depth reporting has been liberating, McClure said, and having stories run in more than one place “multiplies the impact.” The drawbacks are that “everything takes a lot longer than you think it will,” he said, and he doesn’t have an infrastructure backing him up, such as an IT department or even office cleaners.

Indeed, with reduced incomes, many journalists have found it difficult to carve out the funds for expenses that bigger employers used to pick up, everything from travel to professional development.

SEJ has tried to step into the breach, with the launch of The Fund for Environmental Journalism this year, raising and awarding so far \$7,800 in small grants for travel, training, graphics, environmental testing and other costs associated with projects it deems worthwhile. Grants went to investigative reporting and online news service startups as well as freelance authors and producers.

Angela Posada-Swofford said she hasn’t been able to attend the SEJ gatherings in five years because of cost. She has been at the freelance life a bit longer than many; she left Miami’s El Nuevo Herald in 1996, after nine years, for a difficult freelance existence, which included translating to get by financially. Since 2004 she has had a full-time post, albeit without benefits, as the U.S. correspondent for Madrid’s *Muy Interesante*, a general interest science magazine. She also freelances on the side. “I have sacrificed at lot,” she said. “I just make do, but I am so utterly, insanely happy.”

Next year, she’ll be at the convention because it will be coming to her when it is held in Miami. She has agreed to be a co-chair. □

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The Science of Climate

Meteorologists' Role Expanding

By *Hillary Atkin*

Television meteorologists and weather forecasters across the nation have large and loyal audiences, and they are often able to effectively disseminate scientific information about climate change and other environmental topics that impact their local markets.

A new study shows that weathercasters can play an important role as informal climate change educators. Yet it's clear that, whether because of personal preference or broadcast time restraints, large numbers do not.

"Our surveys of the public have shown that many Americans are looking to their local TV weathercaster for information about global warming," said Edward Maibach, director of the Center for Climate Change Communication at George Mason University, Fairfax, Va., which conducted the study.

The survey says climate change is already one of the most common science topics TV weathercasters discuss — most often at speaking events, but also at the beginning or end of their on-air segments, on blogs and websites, on the radio and in newspaper columns.

"There's a fairly serious push for weathercasters to define their niche and to grow their content from weather to science issues at large," Maibach said. "Very few stations have science reporters. There's a lot of enthusiasm among weathercasters and among news directors. There's clearly a potential for many weathercasters to have an expanded portfolio."

AMS Spearheading the Movement

Although the American Meteorological Society is leading the charge to have meteorologists take on roles as "station scientists," at least one of its executives is realistic about the uphill battle to expand their functions on the air when it comes to explaining scientific information.

"Even though they reach a lot of people, they're not an important source of information on climate change," said William Hooke, director of the AMS' policy program. The AMS is the pre-eminent professional organization that gives its seal of approval to meteorologists through a rigid certification program, which stations then use to promote their forecasters. It has about 1,500 broadcast members, which represent about 10 percent of the total membership.

There is clearly much controversy about climate change and global warming among the rank and file. The George Mason University study, funded by the National Science Foundation with about 570 respondents, showed that a majority of weathercasters (54 percent) believe climate change is happening, and 55 percent are quite interested in covering it as part of their work. But 25 percent believed global warming isn't happening, and 21 percent say they don't know yet.

Among climatologists, 96 percent are convinced that global warming is real and that human activity is a significant cause of the warming. "Climate scientists may need to make their case directly to

America's weathercasters, because these two groups appear to have a very different understanding about the scientific consensus on climate change," Maibach said.

Maibach and his colleagues see the three groups of weathercasters as three distinct audiences. For those who adhere to the findings of a majority of scientific studies showing climate change, they want to develop educational resources — and have already begun the process.

Jim Gandy of WLTX-TV in Columbia, S.C., has been the station's chief meteorologist since 1999, and on the air in his market for nearly 30 years. He is the "test pilot" in a yearlong program begun in July that inserts climate change information into his weathercast to help viewers visualize the correlation between extreme weather in their region and global climate change.

Measuring the Results

Called "Climate Matters," the animation modules were produced and developed by George Mason University in conjunction with the AMS and the National Weather Association, another nonprofit professional organization that certifies weather broadcasters. The goal is to measure to what extent viewers learned about the link between predicted extreme weather events in their market and the changing global climate after the test runs for a year — and then expand it to other markets.

"Around here a lot of people don't believe in climate change because they don't want to," said Gandy. "What I'm trying to do is explain that this is what's happening. In looking at the science, it's sound. People who've been arguing the contrary haven't explained the science. If it's not happening, then what's causing it? It's not the sun. We know it's nothing natural — it's increases in greenhouse gases. I'm not an ideologue. If you can say why the earth is warming without greenhouse gases — but no one's been able to do that."

Gandy has 15 animation modules that can be inserted into his weathercast. "I try to do it once a week," he said. "We let events drive it, whatever conditions are at the time." Although his news director and general manager are supportive, he regularly receives negative

"There's a fairly serious push for weathercasters to ... grow their content from weather to science issues."

-Edward Maibach, George Mason University

comments from viewers who do not buy into global warming.

"The only reason is, they're trying to embrace the oil and gas industry and keep energy costs cheap," said Gandy. "The problem is, you're not paying for unintended consequences of that action. My question is, when it gets expensive, what are you going to do? Oil and gas won't stay cheap forever. The economy has made the focus very short-term; no one is thinking long-term. That's the problem with climate change — it's not going to be solved in a year or two. For us to affect anything, it's a 25-year timeline." □

World of Discovery

Channels Heighten Awareness, Practice What They Preach

By Allison J. Waldman

As one of the most environmentally oriented network groups on cable, Discovery Communications has met the challenge of educating and entertaining viewers through a variety of methods.

Its channels include Science Channel, Planet Green, Investigation Discovery and others that address green living and environmental issues on air. But more than that, Discovery practices what it preaches behind the scenes, too.

Science Channel began in 1999 as Discovery Science, but the mission of the channel has remained the same, despite the name change. "The network really takes science and tries to demystify it. It's about making all science relatable, very personal to people so that they don't see science as a barrier," said Debbie Myers, the channel's executive VP and general manager.

When specifically dealing with the environment, Science takes a novel approach that's equal parts fun and fact, she said. "What we will do is shed

the spotlight on crazy geniuses or action-oriented programs where the environment is a natural, organic part of it and you see people doing green things in it, rather than making it a lecture or doing specials on it," she said.

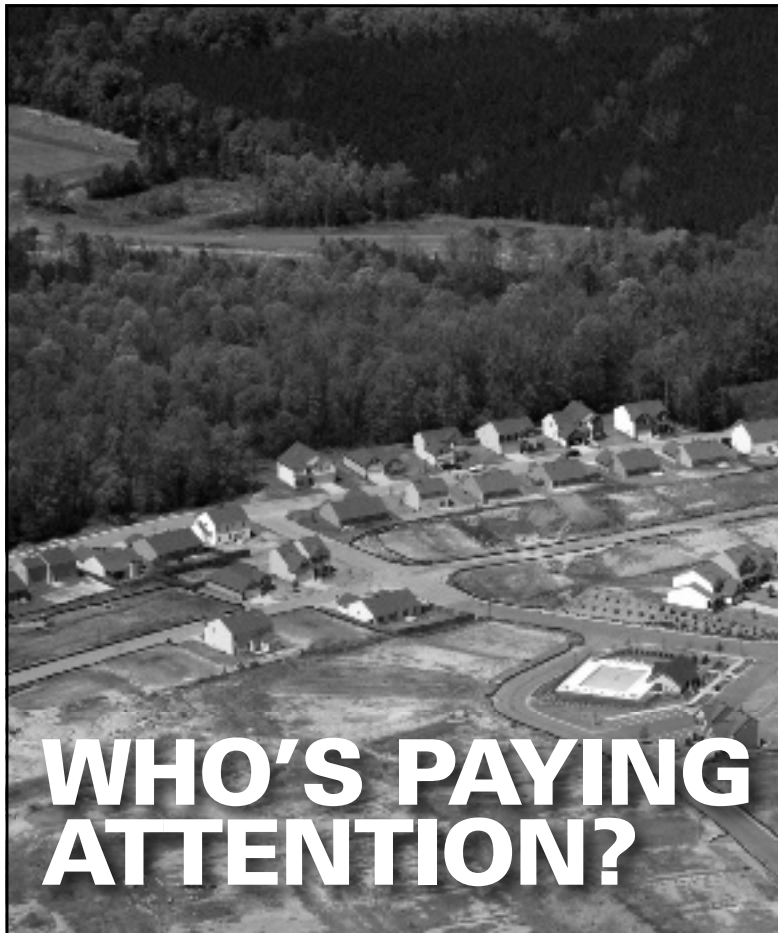
On Planet Green, Myers notes, you'll find "The Kamen Code," a show about the inventions of Segway creator Dean Kamen and his attempts to make the world a better place with cutting-edge technology. Kamen has numerous environmental patents on devices that have done just that, including the Slingshot, a water purifier that can distill water from nearly every kind of source.

All in the Game

Science Channel has successfully crossed platforms with a game. "We created this very cool game called 'Power Planet,' where people could run their own world," said Myers. "They could watch the show on air and, after watching and learning about different fuel sources, embedded in the program were codes that you could put into the game and it unlocked resources for you to get energy for your planet."

Coming Oct. 19 is a new show that reflects the Science Channel philosophy, Myers said. "We are a place where people get excited about everyday science in everyday life. 'Bugging Out' is all about Ken, the bug guy. Along the way, there's an environmental component."

While programming is one way Discovery Channels promotes environmental awareness, it also is taking such steps behind the scenes. "It's very important to us to be environmentally conscious and green. This is a platinum LEED building," said Myers about the company's carbon-neutral Silver Spring, Md., headquarters, the first building in Maryland to receive LEED certification by the U.S. Green Building Council. □



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Contact the American Forest Foundation to hear about solutions to avert this perfect storm.

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The Great Chase

An L.A. Meteorologist Takes His Viewers Into Tornado Country

By *Hillary Atkin*



Television weathercasters frequently talk about the eye of the storm, although it's not often that they're actually able to witness those storms firsthand.

That's not the case for KABC-TV meteorologist Dallas Raines, who for four years running has chased tornadoes throughout the Midwest — and come back to his home base in Los Angeles with a wealth of knowledge and incredible storm video to share with viewers of his top-rated weathercast.

The “Chasing Tornadoes” segments have drawn huge viewer response in a region that is far from the nation’s “Tornado Alley,” generating thousands of hits on KABC’s website. Not surprising, since fascination with twisters has been part of their mythology promulgated through film and television since 1939’s “The Wizard of Oz,” “Twister” (1996) and continuing to the present-day Discovery Channel series “Storm Chasers.”

Raines’ fascination with extreme weather began when he was a boy growing up in Georgia. As a tornado bore down on his school when he was in sixth grade, the emergency sirens went off and the children were shepherded into a storm cellar, but Raines said he hid in a closet instead — and came out to see the roiling clouds of the approaching storm.

KABC-TV'S DALLAS RAINES HAS BEEN CHASING TORNADOES WITH OTHER METEOROLOGISTS AND SCIENTISTS FOR FOUR YEARS

These days, during the peak tornado season — which runs from about April 15 through June 15 — Raines heads to the Plains states with a group called Tempest Tours, along with other meteorologist and scientists.

“Through the years, I’ve learned that it is not simple to pinpoint exactly where a twister will form, even if the conditions are favorable. It takes patience, a lot of waiting, and a whole lot of driving,” he said.

Colorado Close-Up

After studying prediction models, weather maps and radar, Raines targeted Colorado this season as the place to be. And as it turns out, he had his closest encounter ever with a twister.

“After waiting and watching, when the first tornado appeared I couldn’t believe what I was seeing,” he said. “You could see the winds swirling around counterclockwise. It was just the most beautiful funnel. We were less than a quarter of a mile away and I was instantly amazed by its beauty.”

As the force and full fury of the storm drew closer, and as their adrenaline levels rose, Raines and his colleagues realized it was time to head to safer ground. They jumped in their cars and drove to safety, admiring the swirling beast from a distance.

“Suddenly, there was silence. The violent storm that produced so much power was vanishing before our eyes,” he said. “As I looked in the distance I saw a beautiful rainbow, as if it was a sign that our adventure was coming to an end.”

The Tempest team “intercepted” a record 28 tornadoes during the 2010 spring season, including a large tornado near Bushland, Texas, on

April 20; four more near Goodnight, Texas, on April 22; and four twisters near Howes, S.D., on May 24, including one lasting 45 minutes.

Although there is danger involved, Tempest Tours says it has a solid safety record since it began in 2003. “Yes, there’s a bit of danger when you’re dealing with 150 mph winds, and the storms can be unpredictable,” Raines said. “Even being a meteorologist, I would never go out on my own. These guys know what they’re doing and have all the right equipment.”

As part of his tornado touring, Raines has visited the scene of the devastating Greensburg, Kan., tornado, which destroyed 95 percent of the town and killed 11 people on May 4, 2007. “I was there the next day, and talked to a 12-year-old boy and his mother whose house was destroyed,” he said. “If the tornado had hovered over them for 10 more seconds the whole family would have been sucked out of their storm shelter in the basement.”

Rebuilding It Right

He went back this year to see the rebuilt town, which chose to go “green” — a reconstruction that has been chronicled in several documentaries. “If something’s been destroyed, why not do the best you can to rebuild it in an environmentally sensitive way?” said Raines.

The American Meteorological Society broadcast certified meteorologist, who has been forecasting the weather on ABC7 in Los Angeles since 1984, says he plans on continuing his annual expeditions to tornado country — unless predictions aren’t ripe for the violently swirling storms to develop. □

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SEJ Shares a Prestigious Honor



BETH PARKE ACCEPTS THE GULBENKIAN INTERNATIONAL PRIZE ON BEHALF OF SEJ

By Elizabeth Jensen

At a time when many environmental journalists feel beleaguered by the broader crisis facing journalism, an international foundation has rewarded the Society of Environmental Journalists for its work supporting the profession.

The 2010 Calouste Gulbenkian International Prize was awarded jointly in July to SEJ and the Institute for Alpine Environment, a

scientific research center that is part of EURAC, the European Academy of Bozen/Bolzano.

‘Fostering Universal Values’

The prize, created in 2007 by the Lisbon-based Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in commemoration of its 50th anniversary, honors an individual or institution “whose thoughts or actions make a decisive contribution to and have significant impact on understanding, defending or fostering the universal values of the human condition.” Last year’s prize went to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres and the Peace Research Institute in the Middle East (PRIME).

This year’s five-person jury, headed by Jorge Sampaio, the former president of Portugal, was unanimous in its decision.


Sampaio, in his remarks at the July 20 prize ceremony, called the winners “two institutions with different missions, fields of activity and profiles, but united in a single common concern, that of contributing to the conservation of the environment, biodiversity and the integration of environmental dimension in a perspective of sustainable development.”

He added that “The award of the Gulbenkian International Prize to the Society of Environmental Journalists lies precisely in the recognition of the unique role that the media can have in the ‘environmental basic education’ of citizens, in the individual and collective responsibility for the protection of nature and for the management of natural resources as global public assets.”

Fateful Phone Call

The prestigious honor came about for SEJ after the Gulbenkian Foundation called the SEJ office asking whether SEJ wanted to nominate someone and SEJ’s executive director, Beth Parke, realized that the organization itself fit the criteria for the prize. But the rules prohibited self-nomination, so population biologist Paul Ehrlich, a longtime SEJ member and the president of Stanford University’s Center for Conservation Biology, stepped in and put forth the nomination.

The nomination cited SEJ’s ongoing public service mission of helping journalists improve their knowledge of complex environmental issues, including biodiversity, particularly at the annual conference, where popular tours pair journalists with scientists for on-the-ground explorations.



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GEO THERMAL ENERGY



THE 2010 GULBENKIAN INTERNATIONAL PRIZE CEREMONY IN LISBON, PORTUGAL

“These are groups ... that share a commitment to promoting knowledge.”

-Beth Parke, SEJ

Parke said SEJ was particularly happy to share the prize with a research group. “We’ve always felt very strongly that environmental journalists and environmental scientists need to work together to do their best work,” she said.

Younger scientists, she said, are more willing to include public communication as a part of their mission and their work, “which is a bit of a change in the culture of science.” The prize, she said, made explicit that “these are groups in our society that share a commitment to promoting knowledge.”

Jay Letto, a co-founder of SEJ two decades ago and currently its conference director, said “the idea of getting journalists into the field with scientists and experts who know what’s going on out there has been a personal interest of mine for a long, long time.”

Complex Beat

SEJ’s biodiversity work is some of the organization’s most important, he said. The environmental beat is complex, calling on reporters to master not just complicated science, but politics, economics and societal issues, and the complexity of the ecosystem can get lost in the shuffle, he said, adding, “The connectedness part of it is real key and it opens up a lot of eyes” when reporters get out in the field to hear it from the experts themselves.

SEJ split the \$100,000 Euro prize with the Institute for Alpine Environment; once exchanged to dollars, its share of the prize came to \$64,000. Because the faltering economy has taken its toll on SEJ’s finances — 65 percent of its budget comes from grants — the money is going to support ongoing services, not a new project, said Parke. The money, she said, “is very helpful, indeed, and uplifting. It keeps us at it; it keeps us going.” □

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Making Green News

MSNBC Keeps Environmentally Aware, Both Inside and Out

By Allison J. Waldman

NBC Universal has had a high profile among TV network groups in its commitment to “going green,” and it’s ongoing within its news operations.

According to the company’s Beth Colleton, who is VP of Green is Universal/Sustainability, “We look to not only reduce our carbon footprint but we’ve also looked to innovate in digitization and how we transmit information.”

That endeavor, she said, is especially true of the branches of NBC News, including CNBC and MSNBC.

iPads in the Newsroom

One visible and innovative way that MSNBC has reduced its carbon footprint has been through the use of Apple iPads in its news studios. “It’s technology that we’re using on-air because, quite frankly, it looks cool. It’s a wireless device you can walk around with and interact with, but we also use it because it makes our jobs easier,” said Adam Benalt, MSNBC director of production technology.

Using the iPad has eliminated the paper waste typical in news studios. Scripts are digitized instead of printed, which means less paper and ink to make copies, less energy to run equipment, and eliminates the need for production assistants to run the pages to the talent on the floor.

“We’re transitioning to the iPad and we’re giving our stage managers a rundown of the show digitally,” said Benalt. While the old way of doing things would have the stage manager scribbling changes onto a paper script, he said, handing an iPad to the stage manager allows him to keep up with every change as the broadcast incorporates breaking news, instantly linking to the director’s computer.

Digital journalism is another environmentally sound technological advancement in the news-gathering world, according to Stokes Young, director of multimedia for MSNBC.com.

“Instead of needing a satellite truck and a bunch of power requirements for every story in the field, a reporter can be out there with a transition kit that essentially does the work out of a rental car,” said Young. “The equipment is in a backpack. It’s about the size of a laptop. That definitely saves on the carbon footprint.”



FROM LEFT: NBC UNIVERSAL'S COLLETON; MSNBC'S BENALT AND YOUNG

Finding New Ways

Looking ahead, MSNBC anticipates utilizing more technology that will help the bottom line and the green theme. “We had a meeting where we introduced all the journalists and all the producers to the different kinds of newsgathering tools now available,” said Benalt.

The Comcast takeover of NBC Universal won’t alter the vision for the network group either. “Comcast has really ramped up their focus on environmental sustainability as well, particularly around energy,” said Colleton. “They’ve done a lot of pioneering. The worldwide marketplace is focused on this issue.” □



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SEJ Award Winners

The Society of Environmental Journalists will honor winners of its 2009-10 Awards for Reporting on the Environment Oct. 13, 2010, at a gala ceremony at the University of Montana – Missoula. A list of the winners, and the SEJ's descriptions of them, follows (some descriptions edited for space).

SEJ's Rachel Carson Environment Book Award

First Place: *Heart of Dryness: How the Last Bushmen Can Help Us Endure the Coming Age of Permanent Drought* / Walker & Co. / James G. Workman

Judges were impressed by this book's originality and ambitious approach. "Heart of Dryness" explains the global water crisis through the eyes of the Bushmen of Botswana, a group of persecuted people who have learned to survive in the Kalahari Desert and its longstanding drought. Workman provided a point of view rarely found or captured in North American books and wrote with eloquence, grace and objectivity. Judges said he raised serious questions about how water has been used as a political tool and showed the bold steps some people from different walks of life will take to protect their sense of home.

Second Place: *Unquenchable: America's Water Crisis and What to Do About It* / Island Press / Robert Glennon

Though there have been other books before it that have put America's water crisis into some sort of regional perspective, "Unquenchable" impressed judges with its depth of reporting, its comprehensive scope, its authoritative voice and its almost up-to-the-minute research. One judge stated that Glennon provided "a masterful survey of our nation's tangled water policies, as well as our wrongheaded assumptions that we can develop in the desert despite ever scarcer supplies of water."

Third Place: *Paving Paradise: Florida's Vanishing Wetlands and the Failure of No Net Loss* / University Press of Florida / Craig Pittman and Matthew Waite

Disguised as a regional book about Florida, "Paving Paradise" is an absolute must-read for anyone concerned about regulatory incompetence and accountability, especially that of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its enormous influence on how our nation's land is destroyed and its water polluted by unwise development. The authors spent more than three years investigating state and federal agencies that just couldn't say no to developers. Their exhaustive research is highly evident in this book, not just in connecting the dots between different projects but also in gaining the trust of key officials for hard-hitting candor and insight. Commendable. Gutsy. An excruciatingly well-documented and thorough examination of what went wrong in the Sunshine State. "This is top-notch investigative journalism," one judge said.

Kevin Carmody Award for Outstanding Investigative Reporting, Print

First Place: *Toxic Waters* / The New York Times / Charles Duhigg

Charles Duhigg's groundbreaking and impactful look at America's drinking water is the unanimous choice among judges for the Carmody Investigative Print Award. The length, scope and revelations contained in the "Toxic Waters" investigation made an impressive contribution to the public debate on water use in the U.S. It also proved impossible for politicians to ignore, resulting in the sort of changes befitting the best watch-dog journalism. The excellent multimedia use of data and graphics also nicely complemented the fine storytelling in the text.

Second Place: *Natural Gas Drilling: A Threat to Water?* / ProPublica / Abraham Lustgarten, Joaquin Sapien, Sabrina Shankman

This exhaustive ProPublica series into the environmental impact of natural gas drilling on water resources raised public awareness of an important, but largely overlooked, environmental issue and helped to spur politicians to action. The methodical and well-written stories were easily understandable, neatly melding the human experience with the investigative paper chase. Importantly, the series exposed not just problems, but also pointed to solutions.

Third Place: *Who's Watching the Farm?* / Wisconsin State Journal / Ron Seely

This series bravely took on the big factory farm lobby, exposing weaknesses in government regulation and enforcement that are putting important water resources — and the citizens who rely upon them — at risk. "Who's Watching the Farm" is an example of journalistic excellence, making an important contribution to the public debate just as the Department of Natural Resources is considering a further weakening of scrutiny of factory farms.

Outstanding Beat/In-Depth Reporting, Radio

First Place: *Architects Share Green Building Ideas* / PRI's The World / Jason Margolis

This piece stood head and shoulders above the competition for the reporter's skill in taking a simple and increasingly familiar concept — greenhouse gas emissions — and helping the listener understand it in terms of the spaces so many of us inhabit during our workdays. Margolis used sound exceptionally well to bring the listener to the streets and buildings of Toronto and Mexico City. His writing and interviews helped make

architectural challenges, which are so often opaque to the lay public, clear and understandable. The content was surprising, revealing and compelling, and the manner in which it was conveyed to the listener was masterful.

Second Place: *Coal: Dirty Past, Hazy Future* / Michigan Public Radio and The Environment Report / Mark Brush, Shawn Allee, Lester Graham, Rebecca M. Williams, Erika Celeste, Sandra Sleight-Brennan, Julie Edelson Halpert, Matt Shafer Powell

Ambitious, balanced, and deeply relevant, this documentary by Mark Brush and his colleagues is an indispensable guide to North America's most prevalent and most hidden source of energy. The team set out to connect listeners to the source of the energy they rely on every day. What they wound up doing goes far beyond that: They brought us the voices, experiences, hopes and fears of the individuals who make that electricity possible, along with the voices of people who are demanding on behalf of our communities and our future that the energy industry does that in a better, cleaner way. It's a complex, nuanced and immediately accessible piece that should be required listening for the nation.

Third Place: *On Their Own Terms* / PRI's Living on Earth / Ingrid Lobet

This piece stood out from other entries for its capacity to encourage the listener to see the world in new ways. Suddenly, the computer on which we send emails today and the old tube television thrown out last year become important elements in a borderlands story of community development and economic advancement. And it also happens to be a story about recycling. "On Their Own Terms" is a compelling and moving work that ties together economic, social, environmental and community issues. Lobet is to be applauded for the discovery of this intriguing story and the skillful manner in which she tells it.

Outstanding Beat/In-Depth Reporting, Television

First Place: *Climate Change Winners and Losers* / CBS Evening News and CBS Sunday Morning / Ben Plesser and Mark Phillips

The judges were unanimous in awarding first prize to this two-part report, a superb example of what television does best: taking us to places and showing us what is happening with strong, clear images. There was obviously a lot of research that went into this story about the extreme edges of what's happening with climate change, but it didn't get in the way of the storytelling. The writing was crisp, precise and witty. The reporter's on-

camera appearances were dramatic and engaging, from riding in the dogsled in Greenland to snorkeling in the Maldives, and demonstrating by walking in the water what the consequences of rising sea levels could be.

Second Place: *Quest: National Parks Special: Bringing the Parks to the People* / KQED Quest, San Francisco / Christopher Bauer, Jenny Oh, Sheraz Sadiq, Amy Miller, Gail Huddleson, Paul Rogers

Spectacular videography, an inspiring story and heroic subjects combined to make this a documentary we will not soon forget. How fitting that the final word in this entry is "hope," because that's exactly what these persistent visionaries whose story was so well-told have provided for all of us — a belief that miracles can happen with hope and hard work. The piece left us wanting to visit Golden Gate National Recreation Area and to create something this wonderful where all of us live.

Third Place: *Transit Development vs. Open Space/Ancient Site* / KSL-TV, Salt Lake City / John Daley

The judges commend John Daley's dedication and thorough reporting in his "Mass Transit v. Public Space" series. It is certain that while working this story Daley faced the same pressures of time, resources and staffing we all deal with in our newsrooms day today. Yet he followed an anonymous viewer call through to an investigation, and, ultimately, exposed a major case of corruption. A superb journalistic effort.

Outstanding Beat Reporting, Print
First Place: *Environmental Beat Reporting* / The Seattle Times / Craig Allen Welch

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 — such as the demise of local shellfish industries, the conflict between wolves and ranchers, and deteriorating levees — with superb writing. Welch used a wide variety of voices to tell compelling local stories that tie into larger regional or global issues. His stories broke news, were surprising and readable — the trifecta in beat reporting.

Second Place: *The Last Jaguar* / Arizona Daily Star / Anthony J. Davis and Tim Steller

Tony Davis and Tim Steller at the Arizona Daily Star were tenacious and their stories got action, the essence of beat journalism. Their stories on the death of the last U.S. jaguar and the mishaps that led to the death resulted in a federal criminal investigation that still continues. They sank their teeth into a story, kept digging and kept coming up with good angles

Third Place: *Green China* / The New York Times / Keith Bradsher

Keith Bradsher at The New York Times submitted a solid series of often eye-opening stories that shed a great deal of light on China's rising place in the energy and primary resource sector. The stories expose places where China is leading the United States economically and environmentally, as well as places where our green products rely on some of China's most environmentally damaging

exports. His stories broke new ground, were comprehensive and authoritative.

Outstanding Explanatory Reporting, Print

First Place: Agent Orange: A Lethal Legacy / Chicago Tribune / Jason Grotto, Tim Jones, Kuni Takahashi, Chris Walker

The Chicago Tribune's five-part series on Agent Orange's lethal legacy explains in heart-wrenching detail how the weapons of war can keep on maiming and killing decades after hostilities end. Reporting from Vietnam and examining records dating back a half-century, reporters Jason Grotto and Tim Jones found that the chemical companies that made the herbicides knew of their lethal properties, but said nothing, five years before the chemicals were phased out. By then, about 200,000 U.S. service personnel had been exposed along with untold thousands of Vietnamese.

Second Place: Climate Change / The Associated Press / Charles J. Hanley and Seth Borenstein

In a year when climate change stories dominated environmental news, Associated Press reporters Charles J. Hanley and Seth Borenstein brought readers a superb mix of stories that ranged from cutting-edge science to the examination of climate myths. Hanley takes readers to the planet's poles to tell of dwindling caribou herds and boreal forests transformed into a tinderbox by ever-higher temperatures and the munchings of an aggressive beetle. He follows an international team of Antarctic researchers whose traverse of one of the least known places on the globe will help provide crucial evidence on how Antarctic ice sheets will respond in a warmer world, and learns about elephant seals in service to science. Borenstein tackled the numbers and policy side of the equation, including a statistical debunking of claims that the Earth is cooling, not warming, a thorough review of the more than 1,000 e-mails that were stolen from climate scientists and posted online, and a sobering overview of the world's climate promises post-Kyoto. This combination presented readers a diverse, insightful and chilling view of humankind's most daunting challenge — climate change.

Third Place: The Writing on the Wall / Los Angeles Times / Julie Cart

Rarely does a story cut through the cacophony of climate-change reporting to stop you in your tracks. In "The Writing on the Wall," Julie Cart does just that. Dispatched from the Los Angeles Times to cover Australia's devastating wildfires, her reporter's instincts led her to a deeper story lurking behind the immediate news: Significant signs that heating and drying trends in Australia may offer a preview of the catastrophic potential of unchecked global climate change. Her writing is as searing and crisp as her findings are sobering: steel structures buckling in the heat, animals dropping dead from trees, shrinking coral reefs, the spread of water-borne disease, ruined farmers committing suicide. She links human, scientific and political into a tight whole, using the oft-romanticized backdrop of Australia to good effect. The story could have benefited from a deeper exploration, perhaps in a sidebar, of the political and economic force that is Australia's

juggernaut coal industry. But Cart's tight, active writing and smart, connect-the-dots reporting grip you throughout, never confuse and set the table to make you want to know more.

Outstanding Online Reporting

First Place: The Last Untamed River / Radio Free Asia / Minh-Ha Le

"The Last Untamed River" is a memorable project that vividly depicts the dimensions of an environmental issue unfamiliar to many people. This visual voyage down the Mekong River from its source to its mouth brought to life a river ecosystem — make that ecosystems — of enormous complexity. We see and hear about the fragility of this storied river from the people who live near it, as well as the problems brought about by those who benefit from its exploitation. It's a remarkable and thorough treatment, adding a variety of often ignored voices to a global problem. It is outstanding journalism, and the ancillary materials give the project even more depth.

Second Place: A Visit to the Farallon Islands / KQED Quest, San Francisco / Lauren Sommer, Andrea Kissack, Craig Rosa, Paul Rogers

This is a well-crafted and engaging package of stories and visuals that put the viewer right in the midst of the birds on these islands — a backstage visit to a place that citizens cannot readily access. KQED Quest has produced a wonderfully layered package with very high production values. It engages viewers with a slew of online techniques, like interactive maps and links to multiple stories, with creativity and technical prowess. It is an exploration and an environmental story that affords the viewer a deep experience with an opportunity to delve deeply into the subject.

Note: Judges did not select a third-place winner in this category.

Outstanding Small Market Reporting, Print

First Place: Green vs. Green: Environmentalists Duke It Out / Monterey County Weekly / Kera Abraham

By examining conflicts in which both sides laid plausible claim to being champions of the environment, Abraham offered an unusually sophisticated and thought-provoking examination of what it means to be green. Her pieces were thoroughly reported, engagingly told, fresh and fair-minded.

Second Place: A Quiet Hell / Houston Press / Chris Vogel

A dogged and meticulous use of public records to document the appalling lapses of an important regulatory agency. A classic example of accountability journalism.

Third Place: Soup-to-Nuts: Small Market Reporting / Earth Island Journal / Jason Mark

Mark's explanation of the emerging and controversial notion of geo-engineering was authoritative without being wonkish, and brought an important piece of environmental

science vividly to life.

Outstanding Story, Television, Large Market

First Place: Seahorse Sleuths / KQED Quest, San Francisco / Joan Johnson, Jenny Oh, Shirley Gutierrez, Kenji Yamamoto, Josh Rosen, Paul Rogers

A compelling piece about a strange and fascinating creature jeopardized by the global trade in dried seahorses. Beautiful images, combined with solid editing, made this entry stand out, as did the documenting of efforts by scientists and advocates to save the seahorse. This story was made exceptional by the power of great undercover video as well as undercover video from inside the markets where a startling number of seahorses are sold. The narrative structure, beginning with a detailed explanation of what seahorses are and how little we know about them, gives added urgency to the troubling issue of unregulated trade that serves to close the story. "Seahorse Sleuths" is an intriguing look at a species, and an issue, that has otherwise received little attention.

Second Place: Borneo: Human and Environmental Health / PBS NewsHour / Fred de Sam Lazaro, Nicole See, Tom Adair, Skip Davis

This story connects two hot-button topics, health care and the environment, and creates a powerful story that crosses geographical boundaries. Accolades go to the team for traveling to Southeast Asia to tell a story from "in the trenches" where environmental degradation and its impact on human health can be seen up close. The pace of the engaging story is refreshingly unhurried and the reporting team did a terrific job capturing this unique health care program with clear, concise writing, shooting and editing.

Third Place: Algae Power / KQED Quest, San Francisco / Gabriela Quirós, Josh Rosen, Jenny Oh, Linda Peckham, Gail Huddleson, Amy Miller, Paul Rogers

Stunning visuals of colorful algae open this story, which quickly blows the lid off any perception of algae as "ordinary." Good-humored and lively narration, fun use of animations and exceptional high-definition video bring the uncommon story of algae and its potential as a power source to vivid life. "Algae Power" is solid explanatory journalism that covers some vast territory without getting bogged down. Viewers are given rich information from which they can both understand algae's potential as a new source of fuel as well as its potential unintended consequences. Judges found the use of music and sound effects overbearing and unnecessary at times, though it was offset by otherwise exceptional production values.

Outstanding Story, Television, Small Market

First Place: Poison Water / WHIO-TV, Dayton, Ohio / Kathryn Burcham
The judges were impressed with the reporter's research and development of this strong, local story. She and her station demonstrated a commitment to a subject that other media outlets may

have been tempted to overlook. Her tenacity is evident by the positive results that were achieved for the residents of Garden City.

Second Place: The Air We Breathe / WTAE-TV, Pittsburgh / Jim Parsons, Michael Lazorko, Kendall Cross

The judges liked the side-by-side comparison of Pittsburgh to Louisville. It was an unusual and effective way of telling the story. We also appreciated how the reporter pressed government officials for answers.

Note: Judges did not select a third-place winner in this category.

Outstanding Student Reporting

First Place: Powering a Nation: The Coal Story / Sara Peach, Jenn Hueting, Monica Ulmanu, Chris Carmichael

Environmentalists argue that removing Appalachian mountaintops to mine coal is a disaster. For many who live in that hardscrabble area, it seems an economic necessity. Sara Peach and her student team from the University of North Carolina captured that basic division, and its many nuances, in a well-constructed series of interviews and images presented in a style that's dispassionate and nonjudgmental and, largely because of that, makes clear how wrenching this issue is.

Honorable Mention: University of Montana Grace Case Project / Laura Lundquist

A team of 31 students and three professors from the University of Montana schools of law and journalism provided groundbreaking, online courthouse coverage of the W.R. Grace asbestos trial in Missoula, Mont. Thousands of readers from across the country hung on the up-to-the-minute blog posts and Twitter updates. The project made news as the first reporting effort to use Twitter to cover a federal criminal trial. The coverage was innovative, comprehensive and noteworthy for its combination of breaking news, legal analysis and explanatory journalism. Kudos to the team for engaging a community of readers and providing important insights into what has been called the most significant environmental criminal trial in American history.

Honorable Mention: Trouble in Rossmoor: The Woodpecker Chronicles / Bay Nature Magazine / Daniel McGlynn

Student journalist Daniel McGlynn set out to document a flap between homeowners and woodpeckers, but succeeded in uncovering a much broader story that ultimately weighs the costs and benefits of buying a home in the wildland-urban interface. His thorough reporting brought tremendous scope and depth to "Trouble in Rossmoor: The Woodpecker Chronicles." McGlynn's ability to search out motives, his attention to detail, and his dogged pursuit of the story through multiple states provides a rare and honest look at the question of who wins, and who loses, when people move into habitat — and when "attractive" wildlife suddenly becomes "destructive" wildlife.

Furthering a Social Network

Long a Proponent of Interactivity, SEJ Helps Its Members Tap Into the Power of New Media Tools

By Hillary Atkin

Whether it's through Facebook, Twitter or other online applications, the explosion of social media has given environmental journalists new tools and additional avenues through which to ply their trade, whether it be for research, interaction or distributing stories.

But even before the advent of these services, the Society of Environmental Journalists' mission was to build its network of members interactively and help them do their jobs better and more efficiently.

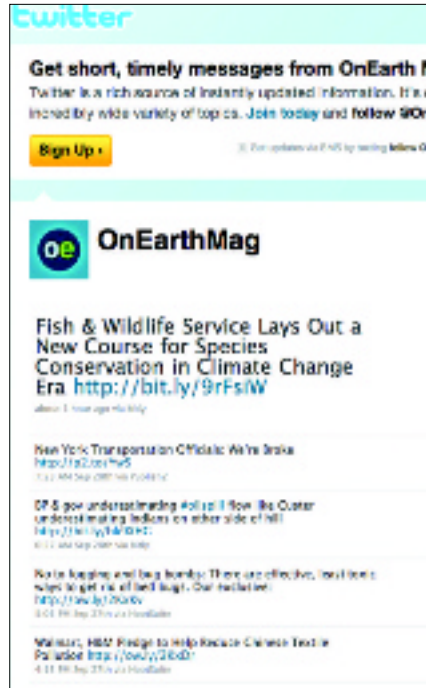
"Social media tools, as they've developed over many years, have always been a natural fit for us within the SEJ membership network," said Executive Director Beth Parke. "Now, increasingly, social media is valuable for interaction and exchange with all the other environmental professionals, students, concerned citizens and communities of various descriptions with something to say or something to learn from environmental journalism."

In recent years, the number of social networking tools available to journalists has grown by leaps and bounds. In addition, SEJ still utilizes an old-school method: SEJ-Talk, its members-only e-mail LListserv.

Information Exchange

"Members are helping other members every day on a remarkable range of how-to, fact checking and discussion topics such as the best equipment to use for multimedia production, how to research EPA violations nationwide for air and water pollution by ethanol plants, and how to debunk 'green-washing' in a press release," Parke said.

In order to provide journalists with information on how to best tap into the power of new media tools, this year's conference features two sessions to help them effectively utilize social networking, "Working With Citizen Journalists and Community Contributors" and "Build Your Own Website:



TWEETS GET WORD OUT TO A SPECIALIZED AUDIENCE

Springboard for Your Media Career." Both will be led by veteran SEJ member Amy Gahrn.

"News organizations are realizing that local startups and informal grassroots organizations are viable venues for discussing issues," Gahrn said. "If news organizations don't get off their high horse and realize that other people matter, they'll fail. They need to adopt the culture."

Veteran environmental reporter and SEJ member Osha Gray Davidson has created a Twitter list of more than 150 members called TweepML, which enables people to follow everyone on the list. It's already generated more than 50,000 "follows." He also encourages fellow

"If news organizations don't get off their high horse and realize that other people matter, they'll fail."

-SEJ MEMBER AMY GAHRN

journalists to use Twitter for marketing their own work and tracking important topics.

"I've been surprised at how powerful it is and how powerful it will become," said Davidson. "We are finding ways of using it more efficiently."

He identified one of the ongoing challenges as determining the accuracy of information that people post online and via social media, saying, "You always have to be skeptical. You must figure out ways to check the reliability and accuracy."

Davidson writes on energy and the environment for On Earth, the online magazine of the Natural Resources Defense Council. "Whenever I write a story, then I tweet it with a link to the story, and I've got over 4,000 followers. Some of those are aggregators, so it goes out to even more people," he said. "It's a way of getting the word out to a specialized audience, people who are tech-savvy."

Pioneering Blogger

Along with Davidson, former New York Times environmental reporter and SEJ member Andrew Revkin has been a pioneer and a leader in online and social media. Revkin, who is now on the faculty at Pace University, writes the Dot Earth blog for the Times — in addition to actively tweeting, Listserving, YouTubeing, friending and commenting — blazing a trail for other environmental journalists to emulate.

As for what the future holds, Parke is circumspect. "Creative environmental journalists and the news organizations they work with will embrace new, creative — but practical — ways

to work," she said. "We will be using social media tools to identify and work with new sources — sources of news, project funding and distribution support — people who will want to endorse, share, transmit the work we do as a player in their own social networks."

For SEJ, the challenge will be how best to support the process. □

Save the Date!

HEALTH JOURNALISM 2011

April 14-17 • Philadelphia

Stay in the know and sharpen your skills by attending health journalism's premier conference. Since 1751 – when Benjamin Franklin helped found a hospital in Philadelphia – the health stories haven't stopped in this historic city. From a vantage point not far from Independence Hall, reporters, editors and producers will find story ideas and top-drawer resources that include health experts who are leaders in their field and the world's best health journalists.

The program will include dozens of panels, field trips, on-the-record newsmaker briefings, Freelance PitchFest, world-class speakers, 2010 Awards for Excellence in Health Care Journalism luncheon and a number of other special events. Expect sessions on covering health care, medical research, public health, health policy, consumer health and the business of health.

Health Journalism 2011's exhibit hall will offer a chance for journalists to visit with experts, meet story sources and learn about new data resources.

Visit www.healthjournalism.org for more information.



Hosts:

- Penn Medicine
- Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
- Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals
- Drexel University/Drexel University College of Medicine

Endowing Sponsor:

- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THE 2010 AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH CARE JOURNALISM

The Awards for Excellence in Health Care Journalism recognize the best health reporting in print, broadcast and online media.

Entries can include a wide range of health coverage including public health, consumer health, medical research, the business of health care and health policy.

First-place winners earn \$500, complimentary lodging for two nights and registration for Health Journalism 2011 – AHCJ's annual conference.



NEW THIS YEAR:
Submit entries online!

ENTER IN THESE NINE CATEGORIES:

- Metro newspapers (150,000 circulation or more) / national wire services / national Web sites
- Community newspapers (under 150,000 circulation) / regional wire services / regional or local Web sites
- General-Interest Magazines above 1 million circulation
- General-Interest Magazines below 1 million circulation
- Trade Publications / Newsletters
- TV (Local, network, syndicated)
- Radio (Local, network, syndicated)
- Multimedia: This category covers all aspects of a multimedia presentation, including the story and unique online components
- Beat Reporting: This is an individual award for which you can submit up to four stories, carrying a single byline, to provide a representative sample of your work.

About the Association of Health Care Journalists

AHCJ is an independent, nonprofit organization working to improve the quality, accuracy and visibility of health care reporting, writing and editing. It offers extensive resources, networking and professional development opportunities for journalists and advocates for the free flow of information to the public. With more than 1,000 members, AHCJ is the premier organization for health care journalists.

Visit HealthJournalism.org to learn more and to join AHCJ.

For more information on entry guidelines, please visit www.healthjournalism.org

Murrows for New Players

When the Radio Television Digital News Association hands out its 2010 national Edward R. Murrow Awards on Oct. 11, there will be some new faces on stage at the Grand Hyatt hotel in New York, reflecting the organization's broadened focus to include digital news. For the first time, awards will be given to video and audio news produced exclusively for online news organizations.

The new categories of online news operation, local and national, acknowledge that "there's a whole new world of news" online, and the public doesn't have to settle for low-quality video from cell phones, said Mark Kraham, news director at WHAG-TV in Hagerstown, Md., and the chairman of RTDNA's board.

Among the 89 winners in the eight Murrow categories, chosen from 2,643 entries, are seven Overall Excellence awards, judged based on creativity, content and execution. The Associated Press won all six awards in the category of national online news operation, but no Overall Excellence award was awarded in that category this year because judges felt no entry met the criteria, Kraham said.

In all, 59 news organizations are being honored, including these Overall Excellence winners.

— Elizabeth Jensen

Television Network/Syndication Service NBC News

NBC News' Overall Excellence award this year, one of five Murrow awards it won, is its eighth in the category in 12 years. The judges cited the amount of "important enterprise reporting," features that didn't go "for the cheap laugh" and "a world-class anchor" in Brian Williams. The submitted package included a wide variety of stories such as a breaking news report on the US Airways crash in the Hudson River, a

behind-the-scenes look at the White House, coverage of Afghanistan, a "Dateline" report on a father's fight for his kidnapped son, and Ann Curry's interview with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

The number of wins in the past decade "is an indication that the formula is about right," said Steve Capus, NBC News' president. "And yet if we don't continue to invest in journalism and continue to invest in quality work it doesn't really mean anything. The question is what do you do tomorrow?" He cited NBC's recent Education Summit as a way the news division is continuing to expand its efforts.

Radio Network/Syndication Service

CBS Radio News

CBS Radio News, taking home the Overall Excellence award in its category for the fourth year in a row, submitted coverage of the economic meltdown, the Obama inauguration, the massacre at Fort Hood, Michael Jackson's death and the US Airways crash on the Hudson River. The judges said, "Murrow indeed!" Kraham said.

Also included in the submission was reporting by Cami McCormick from Afghanistan, before she was seriously wounded in an IED explosion. McCormick, who is back at work part-time while continuing physical rehabilitation, will be walking onstage to accept the award, said Harvey Nagler, vice president in charge of CBS News' radio operations. "That's indicative of the dedication and passion of the staff," Nagler said, adding that one of things the organization is proudest of is the continuing coverage awards it also won for 10 of the past 11 years. "We've got to be proudest of what a great job the staff does day in and day out."

Online News Operation - Local

Minneapolis Star Tribune

The Minneapolis Star Tribune has been in the forefront of newspapers fighting to keep their audiences engaged online, rather than see the readers slip away to TV or other online news organizations. Online video has been a key component of its strategy for the past couple of years, and many newsroom employees have undergone video training.

The winning Overall Excellence package included newscasts from the newsroom and a humorous public service announcement, as well as weather and sports reports and a lengthy retelling, with audio, of a story that also ran in the newspaper revisiting a woman who was halfway through a jail sentence for throwing her toddler twins off a bridge.

The judges, according to Kraham, said of the Star Tribune's entry: "This is what an online news operation should do with video."

Television: Large Market

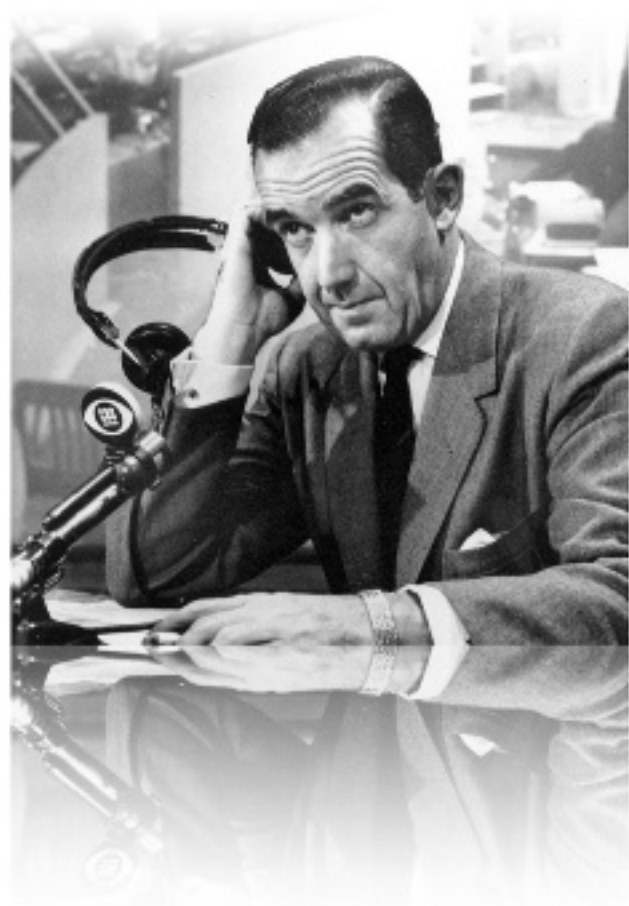
KHOU-TV, Houston

Belo Corp.'s KHOU-TV has won a few high-profile awards over the past two years, bringing home a 2010 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award, a national Emmy and a George Foster Peabody Award, among others, mostly for its two-year investigation "Under Fire," which exposed sexual discrimination and financial misdealing in the Texas National Guard. This is the station's first national Murrow award for Overall Excellence.

The Murrow judges cited "great enterprise" and felt the station had the best investigative reporting as well as a good handle on breaking news, Kraham said.

"Belo is a company that supports journalism" even when the economy is struggling as it has in recent years, said Keith Connors, KHOU executive news director. The station's mission is "not just to

Congratulations to all of this year's Edward R. Murrow Award recipients



60

MINUTES

"Amazon Crude"
"Resurrecting Eden"

48 HOURS

"Lost Children of Samoa"

 CBS
EVENING
NEWS

with KATIE COURIC

"Echo Company"

 CBS
RADIO
NEWS

"Overall Excellence"
"Continuing Coverage"
World News Roundup
"Obama Inauguration"

CBS NEWS

Very Good News

Very Good News

 CBS NEWS

cover the news but to uncover the news. In an era when news has been commoditized, we really believe that the only way to succeed is to go your own way.”

Radio: Large Market

WBUR-FM, Boston

Public radio station WBUR had plenty of advance notice to put together plans for what became a breaking news story: the death of Sen. Edward Kennedy from a brain tumor. “We had done a lot of planning because of the situation,” said Sam Fleming, managing director of news and programming, and “fortunately we did a very good job when his untimely passing actually happened.” The coverage, he said, included “a very eloquent live broadcast” of the senator’s memorial service done by WBUR’s morning host Bob Oakes, which was picked up by other stations.

The Overall Excellence entry also included the station’s multipart series on the Massachusetts high school dropout problem, which included a major Web component. (Public television station WGBH was also a partner.) The Murrow judges praised the station’s work as “thoughtful” and “topical” and called it “comprehensive coverage and execution,” Kraham said.

Radio: Small Market

WATD-FM, Marshfield, Mass.

KATD-FM, a rock-formatted station that programs four hours of news every morning, is just 30 miles from Boston. But, “as hard as it is on our egos to understand,” said owner Edward Perry, “we’re a local regional station and we serve a very specific area. We’re not a Boston station.” KATD, which has won the Overall Excellence award three times before, calls itself “The South Shore’s radio station,” and one Murrow judge said, “I cannot imagine living within this radio station’s coverage area and not listening to them for news,” said Kraham.

Perry, who founded the station in 1977, targets some 15 towns, covering high school sports to parades. “We try to own that turf,” he said. The winning entry included Perry’s own report on a man who killed several people and escaped, a drug bust, President Obama’s visit to Martha’s Vineyard, the death of Sen. Kennedy, and a feature on the FCC silencing a local pirate radio station 50 years ago.

Television: Small Market

KTVB-TV, Boise, Idaho

A newscast that led with a report on an Idaho soldier captured by the Taliban in Afghanistan was a central part of KTVB-TV’s Overall Excellence entry; the station also won a Murrow for the newscast itself. Other stories in the package from the NBC affiliate were reports on a toddler’s playground accident; the local controversy over mining, and the tradeoff between jobs and environmental protection; the plight of a homeless family; the fight being waged by an air force pilot being expelled for being gay; and a local college woman who lost her memory after an accident. The judges found that the station “understands what the viewers respond to,” Kraham said.

It’s the second Overall Excellence award of the year for Belo Corp., which owns the station’s parent King Broadcasting. News director Jim Gilchrist previously worked for Connors, from Belo’s Overall Excellence-winning KHOU-TV, in Charlotte, N.C. □



2010

**Edward R. Murrow Award Winners
Television Network/
Syndication Service**

Overall Excellence
NBC News

Video Breaking News Coverage
NBC News
Miracle on the Hudson

Video Continuing Coverage
ABC News
Iran’s Election Crisis

Video Feature Reporting
CBS News 60 Minutes
Resurrecting Eden

Video Reporting: Hard News
NBC News
To Save the Children

Video Investigative Reporting
CBS News 60 Minutes
Amazon Crude

Video News Documentary
CBS News
The Lost Children

Video News Series
CBS News
Echo Company

Video Newscast
NBC News
The Crash of Colgan Air Flight 3407

Video Sports Reporting
ESPN
E:60 Catfish Hunters

Use of Video
Global TV
A Single Rose

Web site
CNN
CNN.com

Writing
MSNBC
A Baseball Fan Named Marie

Radio Network/Syndication Service

Overall Excellence
CBS Radio News
Overall Excellence

Audio Breaking News Coverage
AP Radio News
Miracle on the Hudson

Audio Continuing Coverage
CBS Radio News
Economic Melttdown

Audio Feature Reporting
WNYC-AM/FM
Radio Rookies Money Stress

Audio Reporting: Hard News
National Public Radio
IED: A Familiar Enemy for Platoon

Audio News Documentary
Long Haul Productions
American Dreamer: Sam’s Story

Audio Investigative Reporting
Youth Radio with National Public Radio’s All Things Considered
In the Kennel: Uncovering a Navy Unit’s Culture of Abuse

Audio News Series
The Environment Report (WUOM)
Dioxin Delays

Audio Newscast
CBS Radio News
CBS World News Roundup

Audio Sports Reporting
National Public Radio
Friday Night Lives

Use of Sound
CNN
The Bronx - A River Runs Through It

Web site
National Public Radio
NPR.org

Writing
National Public Radio
Tell Me More

Online News Operation - National

Video Continuing Coverage
The Associated Press
Economy

Video Feature Reporting
The Associated Press
Liberty Snowflex

Video Reporting: Hard News
The Associated Press
Kidney Swap

Video Investigative Reporting
The Associated Press
Toxic Water Fountains

Video News Documentary
The Associated Press
Killer Blue: Baptized by Fire

Video News Series
The Associated Press
Marine’s Diary

Online News Operation - Local

Overall Excellence
Star Tribune - Minneapolis
Star Tribune Composite

Video Feature Reporting
The Dallas Morning News - Dallas
Choosing Thomas

Video News Documentary
Knoxnews.com - Knoxville, Tenn.
Death on Chipman Street: The
Channon Christian and Chris Newsom
Murders

Use of Video
The Texas Tribune - Austin, Texas
Stump Interrupted

Web site
The Texas Tribune
texastribune.org

Television: Large Market

Overall Excellence
KHOU-TV - Houston
KHOU Overall Excellence

Video Breaking News Coverage
WJLA-TV - Washington, D.C.
Metro Train Crash

Video Continuing Coverage
WXIA-TV/WATL-TV - Atlanta
State of Stimulus: Tracking the Money

Video Feature Reporting
KARE TV - Minneapolis
The Tyler Project

Video Reporting: Hard News
WITI-TV - Milwaukee
Twisted Family Tree

Video Investigative Reporting
KMGH-TV - Denver
33 Minutes to 34 Right

Video News Documentary
KHOU-TV - Houston
Under Fire

Video News Series
WCVB-TV - Boston
Healthcare Uncovered

Video Newscast
KARE TV - Minneapolis
KARE 11 News at 10 pm

Video Sports Reporting
KXAS-TV - Fort Worth, Texas
A Game of Hope

Use of Video
WTHR-TV - Indianapolis
Steve Rhodes Composite

Web site
Bay News 9 - St. Petersburg, Fla.
baynews9.com

Writing
KOMO-TV - Seattle
Eric Johnson Writing

Radio: Large Market

Overall Excellence
WBUR-FM - Boston
WBUR-FM Overall Excellence

Audio Breaking News Coverage
WBZ-AM - Boston
Death of Senator Kennedy

Audio Continuing Coverage
WCBS-AM - New York
The Tragedy Over the Hudson

Audio Feature Reporting
WTOP-FM - Washington, D.C.
Walkman Rewind

Audio Reporting: Hard News
**Mississippi Public Broadcasting -
Jackson, Miss.**
Boot Camp Program Helping
Dropouts

Audio Investigative Reporting
KCBS-AM - San Francisco
Hard Times: California's Broken Parole
System

Audio News Documentary
WTOP-FM - Washington, D.C.
The War That Never Ends

Audio News Series
WBAL-AM - Baltimore
Christmas in Maryland

Audio Newscast
WTOP-FM - Washington, D.C.
7 AM Newscast

Audio Sports Reporting
WTOP-FM - Washington, D.C.
DC Divas

Use of Sound
KGO-AM - San Francisco
Fowl on the Flightline

Web site
KIRO-FM - Seattle
MyNorthwest.com

Writing
WFAE-FM - Charlotte, N.C.
Lost Boys of Presby

Television: Small Market

Overall Excellence
KTVB-TV - Boise, Idaho
KTVB Channel 7

Video Breaking News Coverage
CBHT-TV - Halifax, N.S., Canada
Ferguson's Cove Fire

Video Continuing Coverage
WIVB-TV - Buffalo, N.Y.
The Crash of Flight 3407

Video Feature Reporting
WMTV-TV - Madison, Wis.
Power to Forgive

Video Reporting: Hard News
WJRT-TV - Flint, Mich.
Baby Court: Connie's Story

Video Investigative Reporting
WHIO-TV - Dayton, Ohio
Poison Water

Video News Documentary
WIVB-TV - Buffalo, N.Y.
4 the Families

Video News Series
KTUL-TV - Tulsa, Okla.
Prison Rodeo, Parts I&II

Video Newscast
KTVB-TV - Boise, Idaho
The News at 10 - Idaho Soldier
Captured

Video Sports Reporting
WGRZ-TV - Buffalo, N.Y.
Baseball Hero

Use of Video
WHO-TV - Des Moines, Iowa
Crossroads

Web site
WSYR-TV - East Syracuse, N.Y.
9wsyr.com

Writing
KTUU-TV - Anchorage, Alaska
Jason Lamb Compilation

Radio: Small Market

Overall Excellence
WATD-FM - Marshfield, Mass.
Overall Excellence

Audio Breaking News Coverage
WRVA-AM - Richmond, Va.
Virginia Randolph School Shooting

Audio Continuing Coverage
WSHU-FM - Fairfield, Conn.
A Community Victimized in the
Shadows

Audio Feature Reporting
KUNC-FM - Greeley, Colo.
Two Men, Two Women and a Baby

Audio Investigative Reporting
WSLU-FM - Canton, N.Y.
Seaway Valley & Hackett's: A Special
Report

Audio Reporting: Hard News
KNAU - Flagstaff, Ariz.
Navajos Hope For Stimulus Dollars

Audio News Documentary
WVFN-FM - Charleston, W. Va.
The Great Textbook War
Audio News Series

**Alabama Public Radio - Tuscaloosa,
Ala.**
The Capital Case of Bridget Lee

Audio Newscast
WATD-FM - Marshfield, Mass.
The MidDay Report With Christine
James

Audio Sports Reporting
**KCLU AM/FM - Thousand Oaks,
Calif.**
The Oldest Dodger

Use of Sound
WMSI-FM - Jackson, Miss.
Progress at Ground Zero

Web site
**WAKR-WONE-WQMX - Akron,
Ohio**
AkronNewsNow.com

Writing
KCCU-FM - Lawton, Okla.
Chrysler Leaves Cordell, Lone Grove
Clean-Up

Sign Off

Miami Like You've Never Seen It Before Next Year's SEJ Conference Promises Big Developments (and Great Weather)

By Jeff Burnside

There will be no way to top the breathtaking Montana backdrop at this year's Society of Environmental Journalists conference in Missoula.

Still, when journalists head to Miami in 2011 for the first SEJ conference in Florida, we'll offer up an array of field trips, special events, plenaries, newsmakers and new options that you may never forget.

And then there are the world famous beaches, South Beach nightlife, renowned fusion dining and people-watching like nowhere else in the world.

And did we tell you? Pack your shorts, flip-flops and sunglasses. The average daytime temperature in Miami in October is 83 degrees.

That's no typo: 83 degrees.

The focus of SEJ Miami 2011 will be new information so compelling and so timely that you'll want to file stories from the conference. Your editor will love that. And we'll have a TV news set where an interviewer will ask you questions about the story or stories you're filing, upload the video of your interview, and post it to your blog or website within minutes — for free.

Headlines in the Making

For TV journalists, we expect to have a camera crew and an uplink available to you for airing your stories from Miami.

And we expect to have headline-worthy new developments on sea-level rise, ocean acidification, beach erosion, coastal overdevelopment, hurricane science and wildlife smuggling, among other topics.

Plus, there are unprecedented South Florida field trips in the works. You will be able to:

- Take a knee-deep swamp walk in the Everglades with legendary photographer Clyde Butcher.
- Take an airboat ride in the Everglades.
- Hunt wild pythons invading the Everglades.
- Scuba and snorkel on coral reef.
- Visit "the deep freeze warehouse," the world's largest collection of biomedical samples from the ocean floor.
- Go behind the scenes at the National Hurricane Center.
- Dive on Aquarius Undersea Research Lab — Key Largo.
- See crocodiles and alligators in the only place in the world where they live together.
- See manatees — Jimmy Buffett's favorite critter — which are at the center of a fierce battle.
- Go shark tagging with world-renowned experts.
- Learn about the cruise ship industry's eco-friendly innovations.
- Go fishing in the "sportfishing capital of the world."



The focus of SEJ Miami 2011 will be new information so compelling that you'll want to file stories from the conference.

- Cruise on a hybrid yacht.
- Lie on the beach and do absolutely nothing.

The University of Miami is our terrific academic host. Donna Shalala, UM's "celebrity president," who is spearheading construction of the new LEED-certified university president's mansion, is personally involved in making our SEJ Miami conference a success on many levels.

Flights to South Florida are cheap, and you can choose from four international airports: Miami, Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach and, farther away, Fort Meyers. We'll have deeply discounted hotels. And we'll have VIP passes to the world's most famous nightclubs.


We are working on some other field trips, speakers and special events that we can't announce yet. But here's a hint: Bring your reporter's notepad and your camera. You won't believe your eyes. □

Jeff Burnside is a reporter for WTVJ-TV in Miami. He is an SEJ board member and Miami conference co-chair with Miami-based journalist Angela Posada-Swofford.

Alfred I. duPont- Columbia University Awards



HONORING THE BEST IN
BROADCAST NEWS
PROGRAMMING



“We can have affordable energy and a clean environment at the same time, so I disagree with people who say we can’t have the best of both worlds.”

That’s a bold statement, but Mark is qualified to make it. He’s the plant manager for CONSOL Energy’s PFBC pilot project.

But what is PFBC technology?
Mark is the best person to describe it.

“I run CONSOL’s pressurized, fluidized-bed combined cycle progress test facility, or PFBCPTF for short. This advanced clean coal technology has been successfully demonstrated in Sweden and Japan, and we’re bringing it to the U.S. in the first full-scale plant.

“At this facility, we’re not only reducing emissions of traditional pollutants like SO₂ and NO_x, but we’re also capturing CO₂, and the CO₂ that we’re capturing is being put to good use. We’re using that CO₂ to grow algae, which can then be converted to a biofuel. This domestically produced biofuel not only creates jobs here at home, but it can also help reduce our reliance on imported oil.”

Innovative projects like the one Mark is working on will provide long-term solutions to reducing CO₂ emissions while still maintaining access to affordable, reliable, domestically produced energy. Those are the types of solutions America’s coal-based electricity industry is pursuing.

To learn more about PFBC technology, see Mark’s story at americaspower.org.

Mark Dunkerley
Pilot Plant Manager
CONSOL Energy – Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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