AIBS news

Source: BioScience, 58(3) : 274-277

Published By: American Institute of Biological Sciences

URL: https://doi.org/10.1641/B580316

AIBS*news*

MARCH 2008/VOLUME 58 NUMBER 3

New AIBS Book Primes Scientists for Successful Media Interviews

Evolution, climate change, stem cell research—scientists are frequently called upon to provide expert information on hot-button issues that pervade the daily news headlines, yet most find themselves woefully unprepared for the bright lights of the television studio or leading questions from a newspaper journalist. A new publication from AIBS, *Communicating Science: A Primer for Working with the Media,* by Holly Menninger and Robert Gropp of the Public Policy Office, will prepare scientists for successful and effective media interviews.

Communicating Science outlines compelling reasons for scientists to interact with the media and describes key differences between journalism and science that may not be apparent to practicing scientists. Step-by-step, Menninger and Gropp walk scientists through the entire interview process, from appropriate questions to ask a reporter to practical advice for on-air or on-camera interviews.

The information and advice in *Communicating Science* is presented in eight easy-to-read chapters that provide vital information for scientists new to media outreach and even for seasoned experts, and it's an ideal text for a graduate course on science communication or a professional development course for students and faculty. The primer's authors speak from their own experiences as PhD scientists in the biological sciences with years of experience in media outreach.

Setting *Communicating Science* apart from other such guides are the first-person interviews with nearly a dozen scientists who have successfully navigated print, radio, and television interviews. The scientists—including "Island Snake Lady" Kristin Stanford, recently featured on the Discovery Channel show *Dirty Jobs*—share advice and experiences on a number of topics, including safely speaking on behalf of an organization, avoiding trouble when discussing socially or politically controversial topics, and reflections on first interviews.

Communicating Science also provides worksheets for building a message framework with talking points, developing analogies, and using props to assist readers with interview preparation. The contact pages at the end of the book help readers organize journalists' contact information and keep track of potential contacts for future story pitches.

Communicating Science: A Primer for Working with the Media is available now at *www.aibs.org/bookstore/*.

Newt Gingrich, James Hansen, and Ira Flatow Added to AIBS Annual Meeting Program

The 2008 AIBS annual meeting, to be held 12–13 May, will explore the theme of climate, environment, and infectious diseases. Relationships among climate, the environment, and human health are manifested in infectious disease patterns, notably seasonality. Vector-borne diseases, such as malaria, dengue, avian influenza, and SARS, are known to be closely linked to the environment and, more recently, to climate. Investigators in the United States and abroad have studied interactions among climate, climate change, and the environment extensively, and the AIBS annual meeting will address these issues.

The meeting will take place at the Westin Arlington Gateway hotel in Arlington, Virginia. The program chair is 2008 AIBS President Rita Colwell, of the University of Maryland at College Park. Registration and poster submission forms are online at *www.aibs.org/annual-meeting/annual_meeting_2008.html.*

Program and Schedule

Opening Remarks

- 2008 AIBS President Rita Colwell, University of Maryland, College Park

Keynote Speaker

- Newt Gingrich (former speaker of the US House of Representatives): "A Contract with the Earth"

Plenary Speakers

(in order of presentation)

- James E. Hansen (National Aeronautics and Space Administration): "Global Warming: The Threat to Life"
- Durland Fish (Yale University): "Environmental Determinants of Lyme Disease Risk"
- Howard Frumkin (National Center for Environmental Health): "The Public Health Response to Climate Change"

I N S I D E

- David Rogers (University of Oxford): "Infectious Diseases and the Environment"
- Stephen Morse (Columbia University): "How Could Climate Change Affect Avian Influenza?"
- Andrew Dobson (Princeton University:) "Disentangling the Role of Climate, Immunity, and Biotic Interactions in the Dynamics of Infectious Diseases"
- Duane Gubler (University of Hawaii): "The 20th Century Emergence and Spread of Epidemic Dengue/Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever: Is Climate or Environmental Change Responsible?"
- Stephen Hoffman (Sanaria Inc., Rockville, Maryland): "The Role of Radiation Attenuated *Plasmodium falciparum* Sporozoite Vaccine in Global Malaria Eradication"

Endnote Speaker

- 2008 AIBS President Rita Colwell

Special Sessions

- Special Session 1: "Science and Society: the Art of Communication"
  Convenor: AIBS

  Moderator: Ira Flatow, host of National Public Radio's "Talk of the Nation: Science Friday"

  Participants: Robert Morris (author of *The Blue Death: Disease, Disaster, and the Water We Drink*) and Kim Stanley Robinson (author of *Sixty Days and Counting*)

- Special Session 2: "Climate Change and Human Health: Developing Collaborations with the Public Health Community"
  Convenor: National Council on Science and the Environment

Workshops

- Workshop 1: "Your Classroom: Integrating Case Studies and Evolution to Help Students Understand Infectious Disease"

  Convenors: Biological Sciences Curriculum Study and the National Association of Biology Teachers
- Workshop 2: "A Scientist Walks into a Bar: Using Science Cafés to Reach the Public"

  Convenors: WGBH Educational Foundation and the Coalition on the Public Understanding of Science

How to Contact Us

BioScience

Advertising:
jrasanen@aibs.org
703-379-2480, ext. 224

Online:
www.aibs.org/biosciencеonline

Permissions:
permissions@aibs.org

Publisher:
rogrady@aibs.org
202-628-1500

Submission Inquiries:
tbeardsley@aibs.org
202-628-1500

Subscriptions:
admin@aibs.org
703-790-1745

AIBS

ActionBioscience.org:
editor@actionbioscience.org

Education Office:
bstagg@aibs.org
202-628-1500

Executive Director:
rogrady@aibs.org
202-628-1500

Meetings and Conference Services: *sburk@aibs.org*
703-790-1745

Membership Records:
admin@aibs.org
703-790-1745

Membership Services and Benefits: *spotter@aibs.org*
202-628-1500

Public Policy Office:
rgropp@aibs.org
202-628-1500

Science Office/NEON:
bwee@aibs.org
202-628-1500

Scientific Peer-Review Services:
sglisson@aibs.org
703-674-2500

Web/IT Services:
jwagener@aibs.org
703-674-2500

Profiles in Biology Web Site

The AIBS Office of Education and Outreach is working with the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to create a "Profiles in Biology" Web page, a resource that will highlight different career paths for students interested in pursuing careers in biology. The information will be on the Web sites of both AIBS (*www.aibs.org/careers*) and the Sloan Career Cornerstone Center (*www.careercornerstone.org/profiles.htm*). Note that there are no profiles under "Biologists" on the Sloan Career Cornerstone Center's site. For that reason, AIBS is seeking individual members who would be willing to have their profiles highlighted for this resource. AIBS members who agree to participate will receive a survey from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. The foundation will work with interested members to complete a profile, and participants may review the profile before the site is launched. If you are willing to be profiled, or if you have any comments or questions, please contact Sheri Potter at spotter@aibs.org.

PPO Posts Annual Report with a New Look

The 2007 Public Policy Annual Report is online with a new look. Read about the AIBS Public Policy Office's activities and accomplishments of 2007 and learn how you can participate. Download the report at *www.aibs.org/public-policy/resources/2007AIBSPPO.pdf.*

NEON Conference Update

NEON science leaders from the Boulder office will soon participate in a gathering called Isoscapes 2008. A special NEON session has been added to the conference in Santa Barbara, California, 7–10 April. NEON staff will discuss a range of topics related to the observatory isotopes sampling plan. NEON scientists will have an opportunity at this session to describe how isotopic measurements in the observatory framework are broadly designed for biogeochemistry and organismal ecology and to obtain input and guidance

in refining the NEON measurement strategy. Attendees will receive a status update on NEON and on the use of isotopes in the Fundamental Instrument Unit and Fundamental Sentinel Unit design. Session leaders will seek community feedback on how best to describe the traceabilty from NEON scientific objectives to its measurement strategy.

New NEON Scientist Aims High

Brian Johnson has joined the Science and Education Office in Boulder, Colorado, as the NEON Airborne Observation Platform scientist. Johnson was formerly at Ball Aerospace and Technology Corporation, where he was responsible for managing the Earth Science Advanced Systems group, leading the development of instrument concepts and technologies for future National Aeronautics and Space Administration Earth Science space missions, and directing airborne sensor development. He earned his BS and MS in electrical engineering at the University of Wisconsin and his PhD in atmospheric and space sciences at the University of Michigan. Before joining Ball Aerospace, Johnson was a research scientist in the Atmospheric Chemistry Division at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado. His research interests include the development of new sensor technologies and remote sensing techniques, and the application of remotely sensed data to atmospheric, climate, land use, and ecosystem studies.

"I joined NEON because of the compelling environmental questions being addressed," Johnson said. "The chance to work directly with NEON staff and the broader science community to help develop the remote sensing platform presented a unique opportunity that I just couldn't pass up."

Johnson directs development of the NEON Airborne Observation Platform, an important component of network design that complements the Fundamental Instrument Unit and the Fundamental Sentinel Unit, as well as the NEON Mobile Relocatable Platforms, which provide investigators with the flexibility to deploy instruments and collect data outside the fixed domain

Brian Johnson, NEON Airborne Observation Platform Scientist, is an electrical engineer and expert in airborne sensor development.

deployments. Johnson is currently refining the Airborne Observation Platform that will be the NEON "eye in the sky," featuring aircraft-mounted hyperspectral instruments and LiDAR, a remote sensing system similar to radar, used to collect the three-dimensional distribution of plant canopies and topographic data. These instruments will provide regional information for scaling and extrapolation of data from all NEON research sites, which will give researchers a detailed characterization of land use, canopy structure, and canopy chemistry over wildland sites, research transects, and areas of opportunity throughout the continental-scale network.

"There has been a great deal of effort by scientists and engineers over the last several years to improve remote sensing technology and data analysis techniques for ecosystem studies," Johnson said. "The use of these advanced technologies in the NEON Airborne Observation Platform will lead to tremendous advances in understanding how ecosystems will respond to changes in natural and human-induced forcings such as land use, climate, and invasive species over regional and continental scales."

New Developments at ActionBioscience.org

ActionBioscience.org, which is undergoing major technical and design changes, announced that the first step of the process has been implemented. The Web site is being transferred from FrontPage to a new platform—Movable Type—which will allow more flexibility and ease of management. The transition is expected to be seamless, and visitors to the site should not be aware of the change. Visitors will see, however, a more readable, easier to navigate, and visually enhanced Web site. Educators and students, in particular, will appreciate the change to a printer-friendly technology. Future plans for the site include an "educator portal" where educators can find lessons and other resources, participate in a blog about educational technology, and learn about AIBS educational programs and projects.

Recent Executive Director's Blog Entries Online at *http://blogs.aibs.org/richardogrady*

- AIBS endorses Science Debate 2008

Recent Education Reports Online at *www.aibs.org*

- 2008 AIBS meeting on Climate, Environment, and Infectious Diseases adds teacher workshop, Ira Flatow of NPR's Science Friday
- AIBS and the Sloan Foundation highlight biologists
- AIBS member receives teaching award
- NSDL BEN scholars program
- Girls take grand prize at science competition
- CHANCE program gives teachers unique learning experience
- Higher-education funding increases in 2008
- National Academy releases new resource on evolution
- A new publication aims at improving doctoral education
- Seminars on Science—online courses for educators
- Professional development and study abroad courses
- Upcoming conferences and events

Recent Public Policy Reports Online at *www.aibs.org*

Public Policy Report for 19 February 2008

- Florida science standards evolve
- Science in the federal budget, a closer look
- Science gets an energy boost
- New AIBS book primes scientists for successful media interviews
- From the *Federal Register*

Public Policy Report for 5 February 2008

- State of the Union recap: Energy, earmarks and economy
- Bush proposes biggest budget ever, will science suffer?
- A first look at the NSF in the FY 2009 budget: Physical sciences favored, again
- USGS budget mixed: NBII to get cut
- Decision on Texas creationist grad program delayed
- AIBS joins call for 2008 presidential debate on science
- PPO posts annual report—with a new look!
- New in *BioScience:* "FYI: Threats Remain for Evolution Education"
- Gingrich, Hansen to speak at AIBS 2008 annual meeting: "Climate, Environment, and Infectious Diseases"
- From the *Federal Register*

doi:10.1641/B580316
Include this information when citing this material.