



2023 Annual Report

CASW Council for the
Advancement
of Science Writing

CASW in 2023 at a glance



of CASW's expenditures went
to direct program costs

CASW awarded

\$82,500

in journalism prizes, fellowships, and grants

693

registered to attend ScienceWriters2023
in person

104

registered for our first Connector Chat

CASW's YouTube
learning channel had

12,595

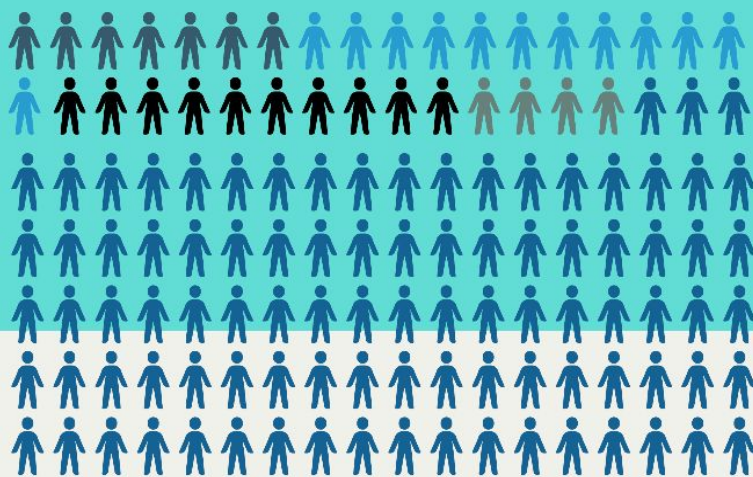
visitors

3,201 viewed a
conference session

8,950 viewed a
Patrusky Lecture

54%

of CASW's fellowship, grant, and award
recipients were journalists of color



303

 received CASW-
supported training

7 science writing graduate fellows [page 7](#)

Taylor/Blakeslee University Fellowships

12 early-career fellows [page 6](#)

SHERF

10 scientist-communicators [page 10](#)

ComSciCon-SciWri23

4 travel grantees [page 3](#)

ScienceWriters2023

270 international journalists [page 13](#)

Spark Grant Initiative



Sruthi Balakrishnan, Dan Keller, Claudia López Lloreda, and Nwabata C. Nnani were among more than 30 science writers who attended ScienceWriters2023 with support from CASW. As New Horizons Travel Fellows, they provided coverage of science at the meeting for CASW's website and mentored student workshop participants. Read more about the conference on pages 8–9.



Hitting our stride

In 2023, it's fair to say that CASW's Science Journalism Initiative hit its stride. Launched in early 2020, the Initiative is playing a central role, alongside CASW's legacy programs and briefings, in strengthening and repopulating science journalism in the 21st-century media landscape.

New and expanded Initiative activities during the year included the debut of CASW's [Connector](#) website and Connector Chat webinars, the second year of the [Sharon Begley Science Reporting Award](#), a symposium bringing together the first two classes of [National Science-Health-Environment Reporting Fellows](#), the convening of nearly 700 attendees at [ScienceWriters2023](#) and New Horizons Briefings in Science in Colorado, and a [symposium](#) focused on advancing science journalism and communication training in Chile. The last event was supported by the [Spark Grant Initiative](#), funded by CASW and science journalists' associations in Europe and the United States.

We are especially pleased with the launch of CASW Connector, an online, curated library of resources for science journalists and science communicators. The library was developed with support from Schmidt Sciences and the Rita Allen Foundation, which also funded Connector Chats, online conversations with expert panelists sharing research, advice, and practical tools.

Our small but mighty staff and a distinguished panel of volunteer leaders collaborated with partners to carry out all of the above programs, along with our traditional offerings.

We invite you to page through our annual report and celebrate with us another year of CASW's premier role in training and sustaining science journalists who serve the public with coverage that meets the highest possible standards for accuracy, accessibility, quality, and thoughtful analysis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RL' or 'Robin'.

Robin Lloyd
President



Deborah Blum (lower left in screenshot), a CASW board member and director of the Knight Science Journalism Program at MIT, offers advice on fellowship applications during the first Connector Chat.

Connector: A vital new resource for science journalism and communication

Science journalism and communication are ever more challenging in a complex world. How can aspiring science journalists find quality training and advice? How can communicators avoid common pitfalls and connect with important audiences?



A new online service launched in 2023, CASW Connector, aims to help students and professionals explore such questions and find the information and opportunities they need.

Launched in July 2023 at connector.casw.org, Connector offers a curated set of resources developed by project staffers Kate Travis and Betsy Ladyzhets. Extensive user input went into building a site that would help people find top-quality, up-to-date information. Some 350 resources were published in 2023 and were accessed by more than 2,100 site users. Many also visited the [CASW Showcase](#) collection of excellent science writing, which was updated with fresh work as part of the Connector launch.

Science journalists and communicators quickly adopted the service and asked for more. Since its launch, Connector has developed through user engagement: suggestions, requests, and feedback sparked by a newsletter spotlighting new resources.

In December, CASW launched **Connector Chats**—video conversations with experts around important topics. Each Chat is recorded as a resource, along with a sheet of tips prepared by experts and attendees.

Partners

Schmidt Sciences | Rita Allen Foundation

Reporters go to the ends of the Earth with mentoring, support

When CASW announced a reporting fellowship that would enable an early-career science journalist to accompany a research team sampling ocean biogeochemistry along the Antarctic ice shelf, applications poured in. Such experiences are both rare and life-changing.

Brazilian journalist Sofia Moutinho won the fierce competition and spent months preparing for the trip with support from her fellowship mentor, UK-based climate and environment journalist Gloria Dickie. Equipped with equipment to capture images and audio, Moutinho pushed off from Punta Arenas, Chile with the GEOTRACES ANT-17 expedition in late November.

Sofia's multimedia journalism from the trip, including a series of podcasts for *Scientific American*, is one example of the mentored reporting done with CASW funding during 2023. Most of the work is being published in 2024.

SAMPLES OF OTHER CASW-SUPPORTED MENTORED WORK PUBLISHED IN 2023

[Eroding coastlines in Alaska](#), in *Grist*. By Saima Sidik, Taylor/Blakeslee Fellow. Mentor: Amy McDermott

[The New Horizons Newsroom](#). Coverage of science from the conference by travel fellows and ComSciConSciWri workshop participants. Mentors: Marla Broadfoot, Pete Farley, Richard Harris, Karyn Hede, Dan Keller, Czerne Reid, Priyanka Runwal, Ashley Smart, Kate Travis, Jon Weiner

Partners

University of California Santa Cruz/National Science Foundation

VO 105 | NO. 6
JUNE 2024
Eos
SCIENCE NEWS BY AGU



Sofia Moutinho's photograph of scientists being lowered onto Antarctic sea ice would grace the cover of Eos magazine.



Five fellows completing a statistics refresher during the SHERF Symposium in Boulder, Colo. welcome chocolate rewards from instructor Regina Nuzzo. The symposium brought back participants from the first two years of the program.

Second SHERF training year wraps

CASW's collaboration with organizations supporting health care and environmental journalism extended into a third year in 2023, when a dozen early-career journalists completed the **National Science-Health-Environment Fellowships**.

The second SHERF class wrapped a year of mentoring and training with a deep dive into urban climate resilience in Chicago and presented reflections from the year and work coming out of the year, including a [Grist-Associated Press series](#) on climate and infectious disease. Program graduates are now working at regional and national news organizations or as freelance journalists.

In October, graduates from the first two SHERF classes convened for the first SHERF Symposium, held in Boulder, Colorado ahead of ScienceWriters2023. The fellows talked with Patrusky Lecturer Michael Mann, enjoyed a statistics refresher, received coaching in trustworthy journalism, and organized their own story pitching session.

“It’s hard to quantify, but I use things I learned in SHERF every day at work. It made me a better reporter and opened me up to new opportunities and knowledge.”

“As a journalist from a low-income background who hasn’t been able to afford many of the pathways to more prestigious journalism jobs, I’ve really struggled with impostor syndrome. [SHERF] has inspired me to hopefully make a big career change.”

Partners

Howard Hughes Medical Institute | Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation | Center for Excellence in Health Care Journalism | Society of Environmental Journalists



SHERF fellows learning about climate resilience tour a water management facility deep below Chicago and talk with engineers.



Taylor/Blakeslee University Fellows for 2023–24. Left to right: (top) Alastair Lee Bitsói, Sarah Hopkins, (middle row) Joseph Howlett, Mennatalla Ibrahim, Alix Soliman, (third row) Andrea Tamayo, and Chiara Villanueva.

Seventh Taylor/Blakeslee fellowship added

CASW’s **Taylor/Blakeslee University Fellowships** expanded to seven in 2023 with the addition of a mentored fellowship supporting training in physical sciences reporting. The new fellowship was suggested by The Brinson Foundation to encourage journalists-in-training to pursue coverage of physics, astronomy, and related fields.

Physicist Joseph Howlett, winner of the first physical sciences fellowship, worked with Dennis Overbye of *The New York Times* to develop story ideas as Howlett began his year of study in the science communication program at the University of California Santa Cruz. In addition to mentorship, the new fellowship provides funds for reporting travel.

Taylor/Blakeslee fellowship stipends, set at \$5,000 since the fellowship was launched in 1996, were increased to \$6,000 this year. Contributions to CASW’s general funds supplement generous underwriting by The Brinson Foundation.

The fellowships brought to 190 the total number of science writers aided by CASW’s graduate fellowships since 1981.

“I’m looking forward to growing next semester, and so appreciative of being a 2023-24 Taylor/Blakeslee Graduate Fellow. *Ahéhee nitsaago!*”

**—Alastair Lee Bitsói
Columbia University**

Partner

The Brinson Foundation



Science writers roam the Front Range

It was more than worth the wait. Postponed twice by the COVID-19 pandemic, the first ScienceWriters conference in Colorado finally took place in October 2023. CASW's extensive programming included a range of **New Horizons in Science** sessions, workshops, and a listening session organized with Native American leaders and our conference partner, the National Association of Science Writers.

Highlights of CASW's 2023 conference program included:

Patrusky Lecturer Michael Mann, speaking remotely as a health precaution, opened the conference at the University of Colorado Boulder with a review of evidence about Earth's climate variability, concluding that there remains time to mitigate the risks of global warming through strong action.

Science writers heard from a panel of experts on unexplained aerial phenomena or UAPs (NASA's new name for UFOs), as well as an update on solar science ahead of 2024's total solar eclipse. A long COVID patient advocate, a journalist, and a researcher shared their fight for answers and treatments. Topics of other sessions included wildfire impacts and Indigenous knowledge.

Partners

University of Colorado
Boulder | University of
Colorado Anschutz Medical
Campus | National
Association of Science
Writers | Centers for
American Indian and Alaska
Native Health | Michelson
Philanthropies | ComSciCon

Journalist Natalie Drake (above) shared her experience on a NASA panel on UAPs onstage in Boulder. Long COVID patient advocate and writer Chimère Sweeney (right) described her experience and work in a session on Long COVID at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus, now available on YouTube as a [recording](#).



Science writers asked their questions of Patrusky Lecturer Michael Mann over Zoom from the Boulder conference site. Colorado's Flatirons (below) provided a dramatic backdrop for events organized by university hosts, including Lunch With a Scientist talks, held at CU's Folsom Field stadium, and a field trip to a mountain research site.



In special sessions, Sharon Begley Award winner John Sutter shared outtakes and behind-the-scenes insights from the unique climate change documentary project the award will support. And Victor Cohn Prize winner Maryn McKenna shared the story of her reporting in a “Story Behind the Story” session co-organized by CASW vice president Christie Aschwanden.

Outside the formal session program, CASW organized a hands-on workshop on working with new electronic health record databases for public health stories and the listening session, co-organized with NASW and the Centers for Native American and Alaska Native Health.

The conference drew an estimated 650 science writers to the University of Colorado Boulder and to CU's Anschutz Medical Campus, where a day of health-related sessions and tours was offered.



Student writers hone their skills

COMSCICON-SCIWRI PARTICIPANTS “GRADUATE” INTO AAAS MASS MEDIA FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Graduates of ComSciCon-SciWri workshops often go on to work full-time at media outlets as AAAS Mass Media Fellows. Examples:



2022: Sam Zlotnik, *Smithsonian*



2023: Skyler Ware, *Science News*



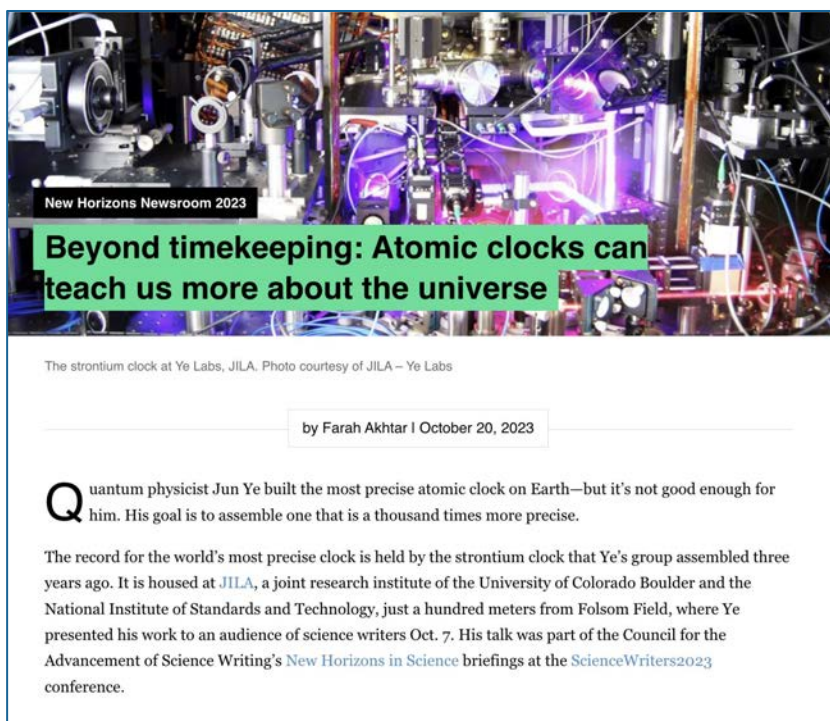
2024: Alonso Daboub, *El Nuevo Día*



2024: Rudy Molinek, *Smithsonian*

Partners

Howard Hughes Medical
Institute | ComSciCon



University of Colorado graduate student Farah Akhtar's research focuses on remote technologies for sensing soil moisture. As a participant in the ComSciCon-SciWri workshop at ScienceWriters2023, Farah took on a reporting assignment in an unfamiliar field, the world of quantum clocks.

Again this year, science graduate students and postdoctoral researchers gathered ahead of the ScienceWriters conference for a one-day immersion in the craft of science writing. And they immediately put their new skills to work: Each took on a conference science topic as a story assignment.

The ComSciCon-SciWri workshop was created in 2015 as a collaboration between CASW and **ComSciCon**, an organization of graduate students and postdocs who facilitate communication training for their peers. Instructors, mentors, and editors are drawn from the professional community attending the conference. The stories provide coverage of the science discussed at the conference on the CASW website.

Ten students completed the workshop and assignment in 2023. Several have gone on to fellowships and internships in science writing or to freelance work; others draw on their training to better communicate their science as they continue research careers.

Awardees set high bar



CASW and NASW award certificates await honorees at ScienceWriters2023.

In 2023, CASW was pleased to honor science journalists doing extraordinary reporting on two of the foremost challenges of the 21st century: accelerating climate change and infectious disease.

Independent documentary journalist John Sutter is the second recipient of the **Sharon Begley Science Reporting Award**, CASW's newest career prize. First awarded in 2022, the award honors the legacy of the late science journalist and celebrates the work of a superb mid-career science journalist, providing a \$20,000 grant to support a reporting project undertaken by the winner.

Sutter is at work on an unusual documentary project, called **BASELINE**, that will document climate change by following the lives of individuals living on the front lines of change over several decades. The first episode is expected to air in 2024.



CASW's awards program took a significant leap in 2022 with the inauguration of the Sharon Begley Science Reporting Award, which bestows a \$20,000 grant on a mid-career science journalist whose work epitomizes the standards set by the late Sharon Begley (1956–2021). In accepting the second Sharon Begley Award, documentary journalist John Sutter noted the prescience of Begley's early Newsweek reporting on the emerging climate crisis.

Cohn, Clark/Payne awards honor excellence

Partners

Donors to the Sharon
Begley Fund and the Ev
Clark Fund | Michelson
Philanthropies

“Sometimes, events like a historic pandemic make it easier to churn out amazing projects, with death, disease, heroics, and pain making for compelling narratives. But the best of public health reporting is borne from years of commitment to the craft. Maryn has this.” —Diane Lore, medical communications consultant



Sharon Begley's husband Ned Groth (left) and Geoff Baum, executive director of Michelson Philanthropies (right), were present at the ScienceWriters2023 awards celebration to congratulate CASW awardees (left to right) John Sutter, Sarah Kaplan, and Maryn McKenna.

Maryn McKenna, a journalist and author specializing in public health, global health, and food policy, is the winner of the 2023 **Victor Cohn Prize for Excellence in Medical Science Reporting**, which increased from \$3,000 to \$5,000 with support from Michelson Philanthropies. McKenna was senior writer at *WIRED* and is a senior fellow of the Center for the Study of Human Health at Emory University.

And CASW's award for a young science journalist, the **Evert Clark/Seth Payne Award**, went to Sarah Kaplan of *The Washington Post* for four stories focused on climate change that one judge said “deftly explore how climate change is upending our landscape and the lives of everyday people.” This year was the 36th for the Clark/Payne Award, which honors journalists 30 years old or younger.

First Chilean symposium draws a crowd



Scenes from a groundbreaking event: Above, journalism students attending SAPECCT pose with Emiliano Rodríguez Mega (orange badge), Mexico City-based reporter for The New York Times; at right, Luz Valeria Oppliger (left) and Víctor H. Valenzuela share results from studies of the public communication of science in Chile; and Victoria Martínez welcomes attendees to the campus of Universidad Andrés Bello.



With support from the Spark Grant Initiative, some 270 Chilean professionals and students held a historic gathering in April 2023—the country’s first symposium focused on advancing science communication and journalism. Major funding came from the **Spark Grant Initiative**, a grant competition organized by CASW and partner organizations funded with proceeds from the 2017 and 2019 World Conferences of Science Journalists.

Chile is a science-rich country, with a rate of scientific publication per population higher than any other Latin American nation. Interest in the public communication of science led to the founding of the Chilean Association of Journalists and Professionals for the Communication of Science (ACHIPEC). But training in science communication is scarce. The three-day event included panels on lessons from COVID-19, science-based policymaking, in-country and international training and career opportunities, and demonstrations of journalistic and institutional projects.

The Spark Grant Initiative will continue into 2024 with training events planned in Asia and Africa.

Partners

National Association of Science Writers | The Alpine Consortium, organizers of WCSJ2019 | World Federation of Science Journalists | SAPECCT organizers Lindzi Wessel and Pauline Godoy Stahl

Financial summary

Audited Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2023

ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	173,593
Investments	1,540,910
Accounts receivable	80,000
Prepaid expenses	224

TOTAL ASSETS **\$1,794,727**

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	17,892
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Total current liabilities **\$17,892**

Without donor restrictions	840,515
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With donor restrictions

Purpose- and time-restricted for future periods	177,167
Quasi-endowment (Sharon Begley Award)	710,299
Endowment fund (Clark/Payne Award)	48,854

Total with donor restrictions	936,320
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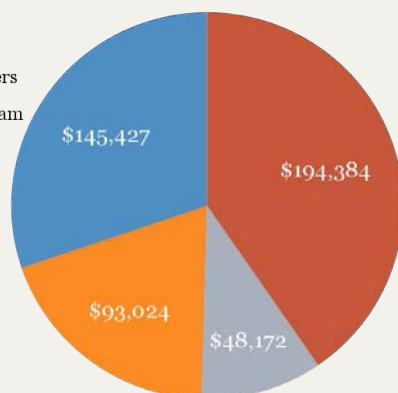
Total net assets **\$1,776,835**

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS **\$1,794,727**

Prepared by Rich and Bander, LLP
April 2024

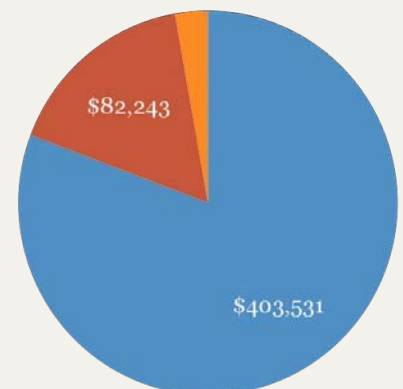
2023 sources of funds

- Foundation grants and contributions
- Individuals and sustainers
- Sponsorships and program support
- Investments and legacy funds



2023 expenditures

- Programs
- Management & general
- Fundraising



A debt of gratitude

CASW's Sustainers

Howard Hughes Medical Institute
American Chemical Society
American Association for the Advancement of Science

ScienceWriters2023 | New Horizons in Science

University of Colorado Boulder
University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus
National Association of Science Writers
Michelson Philanthropies

Workshop and Fellowship Programs

The Brinson Foundation
Howard Hughes Medical Institute
Burroughs Wellcome Fund
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
Center for Excellence in Health Care Journalism/AHCJ
Society of Environmental Journalists
University of California Santa Cruz/NSF
ComSciCon

CASW Connector

Schmidt Sciences
Rita Allen Foundation

International Programs

Donors to WCSJ2017
Organizers of WCSJ2019
World Federation of Science Journalists

Awards

Donors to the Sharon Begley Fund and Ev Clark Fund
Michelson Philanthropies

CASW Council for the
Advancement
of Science Writing

On the front cover, from upper left: Sofia Moutinho on the deck of the R/V Nathaniel B. Palmer in the Southern Ocean; science writers queue to ask questions during a CASW session at ScienceWriters2023; ComSciCon workshop participants relax during the conference opening reception at the University of Colorado Boulder; and SHERF fellow Neel Dhanesha learns about Chicago's massive underground water management system from an engineer during a fellowship field trip. Photographs in this report were taken by Sofia Moutinho, Sylvia Kantor, Rosalind Reid, and Casey A. Cass (University of Colorado Boulder).

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