



Knight Center news briefs

Echo 2.0, Evolving and Adapting —

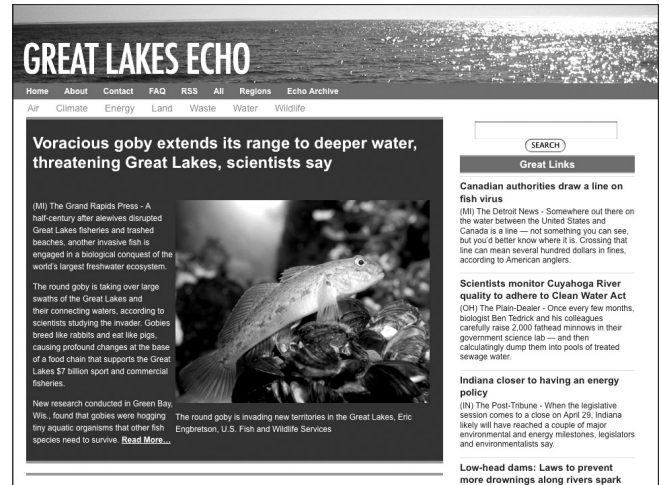
In late March the Knight Center launched the GreatLakesEcho.org, an online news site that produces original reporting of the environment of the Great Lakes, and aggregates regional environmental news.

The Great Lakes Echo covers critical issues that are otherwise unreported, while highlighting important developments to the Great Lakes environment. Stories have included how light pollution may contribute to breast cancer and insomnia, the success and failures of the Great Lakes water compact, how stimulus funding will benefit Great Lakes states' drinking water and waste water projects, and how diversion of river channels has created huge sediment plumes in Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair that are visible from satellite photographs.

Knight Center associate professor David Poulson spearheaded the site, which was created by MSU's Department of Telecommunications, Information Studies

and Media. Knight Center students Matthew Cimitile, Jeff Gillies and journalism students at Michigan State's Capital News Service produce original content while 2005 Knight Center alumnus Karella Weir updates "Great Links," regional environmental news.

The site evolved from Michigan's Echo, a site that has aggregated the state's environmental news for about five years. The new site broadened its scope to include all the states bordering the Great Lakes. Like its earlier incarnation, Great Lakes Echo has an



GreatLakesEcho.org is the Knight Center's newest multimedia project, offering original environmental reporting on the Great Lakes and bordering states.

RSS feed and an e-mail listserve. "The downsizing of news operations

NAMES IN THE NEWS

ANISA ABID, M.A. '08, works for National Geographic Television in Washington, D.C. where she helps produce "Dangerous Encounters," an international wildlife program. She interviews scientists, gathers information about wildlife and organizes logistics for video shots in the United States and abroad.

She won second place in the college feature category of the 2009 Great Lakes Environmental Film Festival for a documentary about biodiversity in Madagascar, which she produced as part of her master's degree project at the Knight Center for Environmental Journalism.

DEBBIE MUNSON BADINI, M.A. '05, is Michigan Department of Natural Resources' Upper Peninsula communications representative. She contributes to regional newspapers and magazines as a freelance writer and photographer. Contact her at debbie.munson.badini@gmail.com.

ANDY BALASKOVITZ, B.A. '09, is assistant web editor at MSU's Environmental Science and Policy Program (ESPP). He will freelance this summer to supplement his work at ESPP. In February, he covered the American



Anisa Abid, M.A. '08, helps produce "Dangerous Encounters" for National Geographic Television.

Association for the Advancement of Science's annual meeting in Chicago, learning invaluable lessons on scientist-journalist relationships. He is also compiling research for a project highlighting environmental education in Michigan for teachers, students and policymakers. Contact him at abalaskovitz@gmail.com.

ELIZABETH BURCH, Ph.D. '97, chairs Sonoma State University's communications studies department. She will be on sabbatical during the spring 2010 term to

write a book about news coverage of global warming in India, China and the U.S.

She also recently collected data for a study on environmental journalism in Maoist-controlled Nepal. During the study, electricity was available in Kathmandu, the nation's capital, for only eight hours a day, and one journalist was killed. Liz and her family have adopted a three-year-old girl, named Aliya Chameli, from India. Contact her at burch@sonoma.edu and 707-664-4059.

LOU D'ARIA, Knight Center environmental filmmaking instructor, is nearing completion of the third production in an ongoing environmental TV series, *Environment*. Titled *The Night Shift*, the documentary examines the mysteries that surround owls, and discoveries by MSU scientists. Learn more at ejtelevision.org.

JIM DETJEN, Knight Center director, was elected a visiting scholar at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at Oxford University in England during the spring 2010 semester, when he will be on sabbatical. He was the faculty coach at the New York Times Institute on the Environment in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic in March 2009. He gave the keynote address

nationwide has created a critical need for quality environmental copy,” Poulson said. “Our hope is that while Echo grows it can provide such copy to struggling mainstream media outlets and to new journalism ventures that have yet to surface.”

Echo also helps the Knight Center train a new generation of environmental reporters who face the challenges of a new era of journalism, Poulson said.

“Echo is an environmental test bed for whatever comes next,” he said.

The site encourages feedback and interactivity. Readers can comment on all articles and suggest story ideas and links to find other Great Lakes environment stories.

The Knight Center seeks support to fund more original investigative environmental reporting within the Great Lakes basin, and hopes to partner with other journalism schools to diversify its coverage.

Educating EJA Members Through Workshops, Speakers —

The Environmental Journalism Association (EJA) had another productive year, providing students interested in environmental journalism with opportunities to acquire skills, knowledge and resources.

This year EJA held nature photography and video/Final Cut Pro workshops, toured Michigan Public Radio, WKAR studios and the MSU student organic farm. EJA hosted media professionals who spoke about social media, environmental video storytelling

and how to tell environmental and science stories with images and graphics.

EJA is seeking new officers for the 2009-2010 school year, including someone to lead the organization. Contact Barb Miller at mille384@msu.edu.

Fundraising Campaign Successful —

The Knight Center for Environmental Journalism successfully concluded its fundraising campaign by raising \$150,000 for its endowment during the past year. Because of the Knight Foundation’s three-to-one challenge grant to our center, the Knight Foundation will soon donate an additional \$50,000.

“The center will have raised \$600,000 in endowment funds during the past three years from more than 1,600 donors. This capital campaign has been very challenging — particularly during the past six months — because of the ongoing recession,” said Knight Center Director Jim Detjen.

“I sincerely thank all of our many donors whose generosity during a difficult economy has enabled us to reach our goals,” he said.

Center Hosts Speaker Series —

The Knight Center’s spring speaker series covered topics from chemical-tainted baby bottles to pedal-powered blenders.

Journalist Susanne Rust talked about her award-winning investigative series for the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* on bisphenol A, a chemical in some plastics that is showing

up in humans. Studies have shown the chemical can cause cancer in lab animals, while manufacturers, lobbyists and U.S. regulators say it’s safe.

Author and MSU graduate Tamara Dean discussed the literal power of the people, which she covers in *The Human Powered Home: Choosing Muscles Over Motors*.

Great Lakes advocate Dave Dempsey presented the history of policy protecting the Great Lakes and explained what governments still need to do to maintain water as a public good.

Knight Center alumnus Tom Springer, the self-proclaimed “Nature Dunce,” read from his book of essays, *Looking for Hickories*, and talked about his writing process.

Bats, Bones and Bodies —

The Knight Center’s annual Detroit High School Workshop March 31, in Bloomfield Hills, Mich., gave about 200 Detroit-area high school students real-world insight into brainstorming, interviewing and story execution. Reporters and photographers covered environmental and human health, conservation and historic preservation issues.

Students also toured Cranbrook Institute of Science’s museum and bat exhibit. The workshop was also sponsored by the Michigan Interscholastic Press Association, the *Detroit Free Press*, Wayne State University and the Cranbrook Institute.

at the Writing Green workshop of the East Tennessee Society of Professional Journalists conference in Knoxville, Tenn. on March 27, and lectured about the media’s coverage of climate change at the National Teach-in on Climate Change on Feb. 2.

JOE GRIMM, a visiting editor-in-residence at the MSU School of Journalism and a strong supporter of the Knight Center’s annual Detroit High School journalism workshops, was inducted into the Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame on April 19. Grimm worked in a variety of positions at the *Detroit Free Press* and *Oakland Press*. He is nationally known for his work as a recruiter. His blog, “Ask the Recruiter,” began in 2003 and is a featured column at poynter.com.

KAI GUO, M.A. ’06, edits *Nanfengchuang Magazine*, a leading newsmagazine in Guangzhou, China. “I believe that my two years at the Knight Center and MSU were one of the turning points of my life,” she wrote.

JEFF KART, a ’93 graduate of MSU’s School of Journalism, is *Bay City (Mich.) Times’* environmental reporter. He has been celebrating a recent mention on “The Tonight Show with Jay Leno” for a story and headline he wrote about “the runs” in Bay County.

Kart said he posted the video on YouTube, but NBC pulled it off. The headline read: “7-day diarrhea runs through Bay County.” Contact him at jeffkart.com and jkart@bc-times.com.

ZHENYU LI, M.A. ’08, works in Washington, D.C. as a correspondent for the *China Press*, a Chinese-American newspaper. Contact her at lizhenyu1@gmail.com and 517-775-5236.

NICK MEADOR, M.A. ’08, is the web content administrator at Michigan Radio, Ann Arbor’s NPR affiliate. He works on the radio station’s Web site and is involved with social media and digital marketing. He will be working with “The Environment Report,” a nationally syndicated program. Contact him at meadorni@msu.edu and 248-877-6787.

DAVE POULSON, Knight Center associate director, launched a new blog, *Cover the Planet*, covertheplanet.com. He also lectured at the Center for the Environmental Impact of Nanotechnology at the University of California, Santa Barbara on Feb. 13.

ANDREW PRICE, M.A. ’08, and Kevin Wilt, a doctoral student at MSU in music composition, won first place

and \$1,000 for *Meltdown*, a television documentary about climate change’s impact on the Arctic, in the 2009 Great Lakes Environmental Film Festival’s college feature category. They helped produce the documentary as part of a video production class taught by Lou D’Aria.

ABIGAIL PUGH, an alumna of the Great Lakes Environmental Journalism Training Institute, works as a freelance writer in Toronto, Canada. She specializes in writing about environmental, mental health and women’s health issues for a variety of publications. Contact her at apugh@sympatico.ca and 416-820-1587

GERI ALUMIT ZELDES, MSU assistant professor in MSU’s School of Journalism, is part of a team of faculty who received an \$88,000 award from the Social Science Research Council to develop a Web site and a master’s-level course focusing on reporting about Islam and Muslim peoples. She and Bob Albers, specialist of telecommunication, information studies and media, are also creating a documentary, *Arabs, Jews and the News*.

She gave presentations at the 45th annual Broadcast Education Association Convention in Las Vegas in April on media analysis and on the making of the documentary.