

Beth Parke Remarks – SEJ Sacramento

September 23, 2016

My goodness, the way these people carry on you'd think I was Wonder Woman! Damn! I forgot to pack my CAPE and TIARA! The last time I wore those was in Lisbon, accepting the Gulbenkian Award on your behalf. All of you who provide the coverage. Obrigada! No I didn't really dress as Wonder Woman. Just felt the Wonder. As I do right now...

But if we're talking SEJ Staff Superheroes you know a Superman cape would have to go to SEJ cofounder and conference director Jay Letto, who really should fly backwards around the Earth to reverse time now, and give us a few more hours yesterday on those tours!

FLASH powers belong to Chris Bruggers, associate director, who does in fact have superhuman problem solving speed and that AURA!!! Joe Davis, SEJ's own Captain America, serving Freedom of Information and Democracy! SPIDER woman webmaster Cindy MacDonald. Green Lantern Kevin Beaty. Iron Man Dale Willman, others! And Action Hero SEJ board members, volunteers and supporters --- C'mon you know who you are! Drop that Incognito routine! Of course we all know about YOU, Batman, aka Don Hopey, who will shine the Bat Light next fall as co-chair of the Pittsburgh conference.

None of the work you associate with me would have been possible without all these other SEJ Action Heroes. ALL OF THEM... Please let's share the applause!

My own powers grew through the grace of my husband of 40 years, Ed Schultz, and son Paul the FitBit developer over there. He was 18 months old when I was hired by SEJ in 1992, and his brother who was five, Dan Schultz, now a civic technologist and father of Ida-who-is-One, back in Pennsylvania. Without them, my contributions to SEJ's mission to educate and convene would not have been possible. So many to thank, hmm... (toss the long card accordion).... But Don gave me only a few minutes...

I am very proud of all that's been accomplished since 1990 when I first saw this organization's long name on a bulletin board flyer, piqued by curiosity, then passionate for SEJ. And I'm deeply honored at this celebration of my time as SEJ's chief executive. THANK YOU!!!

Seriously, if you are looking for super powers to encircle the planet and hasten public understanding of environmental issues – and you know super powers would be a definite plus here -- I say look in the mirror, and around this room, and on to the readers, viewers, listeners, colleagues and connections made, and our combined Ripple Effect, are making the critical difference in what people know, and what will happen next, in the Big Story. It's been my honor to support this network, even a little bit. And now we all have more work to do, and I'm no exception.

My mother always said, "In life, get through the tough days, enjoy the moment, this too shall pass. And when it does, don't look back!" She's never steered me wrong, so I say the same to you. And give generously when the SEJ board asks for contributions! Got to keep that budget for superhero capes well-funded!

Finally I'm going to take advice from another great thinker... Will Rogers. "Never miss a good chance to shut up!"

THANK YOU, SEJ !!!!

