

naturejobs

**JOBS OF
THE WEEK**

Any decent novel has an interesting narrative arc. The reader gets to know the characters in intimate detail and, by the story's end, at least one character changes in some intriguing, enlightening or surprising way. The intention is the same with our Postdoc Journal. Over the past 11 months, readers have seen changing moods, outlooks, opinions, attitudes and priorities from our four journal keepers — changes that, we hope, reflect readers' own concerns.

As the tenure of our 2007 journal keepers comes to an end, our four narrative arcs are summed up in online-only end-of-the-year entries, one from each journal keeper (see www.nature.com/naturejobs/magazine/graduates/index.html). Chris Rowan began the year with a risky move from Britain to South Africa to do a postdoc in geology. He couldn't resist the opportunity — or the area's unusual geological formations. But like so many postdocs, he is concerned about publishing and finding a niche that will help him launch an independent career. He also misses teaching, although so far he has no regrets about his move.

Maria Ocampo-Hafalla came to appreciate more than ever her partnerships, both personal and professional. She writes that finding a good mentor, along with being resilient with experiments, having a clear professional vision and "developing skills for scientific survival", are among the ingredients in her recipe for career success. Moira Sheehan began the year with a joy and challenge many can relate to: a new child. Daycare, illnesses, balancing lab responsibilities with kids — Sheehan was very honest about her continued struggles. And, she says, readers responded with their own stories. Personal distractions have so far made it hard for Sheehan to make big professional decisions — maybe industry, maybe a small liberal arts college.

For Peter Jordan, the year helped him come to a realization about his future in science research: he decided he didn't have one. Although his time in the lab has been far from a nightmare, after a year as a postdoc, Jordan has elected to move on to other pursuits. He wants a job that has more of a direct impact on people. Jordan, like the others, has changed a bit in the past year. The narrative arcs continue.

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