

# What's a Science Editor to Do? Discover, Discuss, Make a Difference: Take II

## Tracey A DePellegrin

Those of you with a keen eye for detail might recognize the title of this article as nearly identical to my inaugural Viewpoint<sup>1</sup> published in Spring 2015. I thought it fitting to write a bit of a reprisal in my last *Science Editor* piece and to reflect on what's changed since the first.

Building on the transformative work of previous Editor-in-Chief Patty Baskin, *Science Editor* was poised to find new ways to bring its content to the reader.

We revamped the publication to become a true online presence—including early online and continuous publishing—plus a redesigned print and online version launched August 2016. I augmented our modern, clean look by publishing original scientific images as covers contributed to *Science Editor* by scientists and photographers and intended to represent the breadth of our readers.

If you've ever ushered a journal from print to online or undertaken a major redesign, you know that the work ranges from the decidedly fun parts (e.g., collaborating with colleagues, choosing typefaces and bold cover art, understanding reader workflows) to the still-interesting-but-somewhat-less-fun-parts (e.g., retroactively tagging 6 years of *Science Editor* articles, user testing, bug fixing, and figuring out how to indent text in WordPress).

The Science Editor Redesign Task Force responsible for the project from start-to-finish included Tony Alves, Tim Bennett, Amanda Ferguson, Jonathan Schultz, Lindsey Buscher, and me, with Patty as Chair, all supported by the CSE Board of Directors. The Board invested its resources so that members and readers would benefit, laying the groundwork for making *Science Editor* content easy to discover, read, discuss, and share.

One of my goals was to provide CSE members and readers with articles and tools that offered not just a broad and deep look at issues in scientific editing and publishing, but also a mechanism through which they educate others—

TRACEY A DEPELLEGRIN stepped down as Editor-in-Chief of *Science Editor* in June 2018. She is Executive Editor, Genetics Society of America Journals and Executive Director, Genetics Society of America.



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colleagues, bosses, potential collaborators, friends—about the importance of our work. The articles could be shared in various ways and could serve as a springboard for discussion.

During the past few years, we've hoped to bring a scientist's viewpoint to the reader and did so in various new ways. Because their struggles often become our struggles, understanding where their concerns overlap with ours is important.

We launched new columns (like Editor's Perspective), appointed scientist-editors (like Lenny Teytelman, founder of protocols.io) to the Editorial Board, conducted in-depth interviews with leadership in relevant organizations (like Laurel Haak of ORCID<sup>2</sup>) and academic editors (like Karl Broman<sup>3</sup>)—all agents of scientific, cultural, and technological change. We showed readers the nuances involved in real-world integration of taxonomies like CRediT, via Alison O'Connell's interview with Gabriel Harp,<sup>4</sup> a senior product manager at Cell Press. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ecologist Joseph E Flotemersch and environmental science editor Justicia Rhodus presented authorship guidance<sup>5</sup> developed for a U.S. Federal Research Laboratory.

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Readers listened as Jessica Polka, director of ASAPbio, forecasted the growth of preprints in biology<sup>6</sup> (and indeed, Jessica's prognostications have been spot on!), and as Lorinc et al. made a plea for editors to simplify formatting requirements in what they described as a painful publishing process.<sup>7</sup> Lenny Teytelman challenged our assumptions about negative results.<sup>8</sup> Jessica LaPointe elucidated what copy editors do and why it matters.<sup>9</sup> Evolutionary ecologist Stephen B Heard in "Is Everything Broken"<sup>10</sup> lamented the overuse of this hyperbolic phrasing, and we wrote a commentary on its application to publishing. (Those pieces, published in 2015, are even more relevant today).

We published a timely article by Thomas J Hund and Peter J Mohler on science advocacy in a changing political climate.<sup>11</sup> Both authors are practicing scientists as Hund is a Professor of Biomedical Engineering at The Ohio State University and Mohler is Professor and Chair, Department of Physiology and Cell Biology at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center and College of Medicine.

We published a spotlight on careers, with illuminating interviews with a variety of individuals from proofreaders and editorial coordinators to executive editors to senior academic editors, medical editors, and consultants.

We've also provided resources in the form of Ethical Editor columns (Debra M Parrish), "Gatherings of an Infovore" (Barbara Meyers Ford), synopses of CSE email list discussions (Tony Alves), book reviews, new member profiles, plus pieces like Editor as Educator (Michelle Yeoman),<sup>12</sup> and the idea of Open Access being more than just making papers free to read (Kuntan Dhanoya).<sup>13</sup>

We published dozens of CSE Annual Meeting Reports<sup>14</sup> from countless reporters—wrangled by the ever-amazing Dana Compton—to bring you summaries of the high points of CSE's Annual Meeting each year. Those reports provide not just a record of what happened at the meeting, but now, robust tagging makes it easy to find information you need on myriad publishing topics. We've published highlights from other conferences such as the 2017 Peer Review Congress<sup>15</sup> and AAAS Annual Meetings.

To ensure consistency in grammar and style, we appointed Jessica LaPointe, Managing Copy Editor at the American Meteorological Society, as our dedicated copyeditor. Jess created a process for each article, and—as with all good editors—her talents are showcased in smooth article flows, with all the glitches removed before they land in front of readers.

And for all we've done, there was always more to do; more I wanted to do. In the fall of 2016 I was appointed Executive Director of the Genetics Society of America. My new job brought responsibilities and challenges, not the least of which was remodeling the Society in a reorganization. Inspiring and inspired? Yes! Exhausting? Sometimes. Turning

the ship of the GSA with a lean staff is rewarding but all-consuming. It requires my undivided attention.

Add to that a 2017 bookended by a broken ankle and pneumonia (what's a vacation in Hawaii without landing in the hospital?), and it was time for a redesign of my own. While overwork and stress seem to be *de rigueur* in science and in publishing, the truth is that there's a law of diminishing returns. I know many of you can relate.

It's a fascinating time in scientific editing and publishing, and change is always afoot. In that spirit, *Science Editor* is poised for new leadership, new ideas, and a renewed sense of purpose, ushered in by its new Editor-in-Chief, Jonathan Schultz.

My sincere thanks to the CSE Board and all of the *Science Editor* Editorial Board members during my tenure, but especially Patty Baskin, Dana Compton, Tim Cross, Barbara Meyers Ford, Barbara Gastel, Anna Jester, Leslie Neistadt, and Roxanne Young, and others too numerous to mention. These hard-working, talented, and lifelong CSE loyalists have been the lifeblood of the publication over multiple Editors-in-Chief.

*Science Editor* (and I) wouldn't have been the same without Lindsey Buscher, *Science Editor's* first Managing Editor and a tremendous partner in publishing. Lindsey's tenacity, energy, humor, and attention to detail were apparent in the quality of *Science Editor*. Lindsey's successor, Beverly Lindeen, brings her Allen Press expertise to bear on *Science Editor*, and has picked up where Lindsey left off.

And I'm deeply grateful that Jonathan Schultz agreed to be my Deputy Editor—a position created just for him. Jonathan brought to *Science Editor* an optimism and creativity that made our tenure together inspiring and memorable.

It's an especially challenging time in scientific editing and publishing. Change is always afoot. In that spirit, *Science Editor* is poised for new leadership, new ideas, and a renewed sense of purpose, ushered in by its new Editor-in-Chief, Jonathan Schultz.

I'm excited—and I know you are too—to see where Jonathan leads *Science Editor*. He has a knack for understanding industry trends and spotting emerging themes, and he has a never-ending stream of (always good) ideas. His vision for the future is one we can all get behind.

Looking back, did we as a community discuss, discover, and make a difference, inspired by some of the material we published in *Science Editor*? I like to think so, and I hope you do as well. Here's to a future of continuing those endeavors, whether in the workplace or out in the world.

Onward!

## Links

1. <https://www.csescienceeditor.org/article/whats-a-science-editor-to-do-discover-discuss-make-a-difference/>

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2. <https://www.csescienceeditor.org/article/orcid-in-full-bloom/>
3. <https://www.csescienceeditor.org/article/interview-karl-broman-academic-editor/>
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