

## ***2008: That Was The Year That Was***

*From the President - Jason Roberts*

I initially started this President's Column with a statement about time flying by, and then I realized it was a terrible pun as I sat typing away at a gate at Boston's Logan Airport waiting for a flight to Cleveland, Ohio.

I'm off to visit a large clinic to talk to some residents about publication ethics and the issues they need to be aware of as some of them start off their academic/medical careers. I'm doing this at the invitation of an editorial board member at *Headache* who has worked with me over the last few months to develop new ethical guidelines for authors and reviewers. The fact that this important task was entrusted in the hands of a managing editor, I think, demonstrates the evolving job descriptions of those of us in editorial offices who have performed more traditionally administrative roles. It's this expanding remit that speaks to the very reason ISMTE needs to exist.

I pointed out to those who invited me to speak I was no bio-ethicist. They countered that editorial office personnel see real-life cases more than any other group, so who better to get the message across, for example, that conflicts of interest declarations are not just some tedious administrative chore?

Winter is upon us, and ISMTE's first year in existence is drawing to a close. The Society launched on January 1, 2008, after 15 months in development. It emerged from a vague idea and became a legal entity. If you will permit, I would like to take time in this month's President's Column to document how the year played out.

### ***The Beginning***

ISMTE more than hit the ground running – we started with a sprint. The first two months were a mad scramble focused on getting two meetings planned and announced on

*continued on page 9*

## **In this issue . . .**

### **Articles**

- *Follow Your Yellow Brick Road* **2**
- *View From the Other Side* **4**

### **Columns**

- *President's Message* **1**
- *Tips & Tricks* **7**
- *Editorial* **12**
- *Portrait of an Editorial Office* **13**

### **Miscellaneous**

- *Updates* **2**
- *A Hanging Committee* **6**
- *Calendar* **15**

# ISMTE Updates

**Blog:** The ISMTE blog is up and running on our website at [www.ismte.org](http://www.ismte.org). Click on the 'Members Only' link on the home page, then click on the 'ISMTE Blog' link. To follow the blog:

1. Click on 'follow this blog'.
2. You will then see a pop-up asking you to sign-in to your Google account.
3. If you have a Google account then put in 'email' and 'password'.
4. If you do not have an account then click on 'sign up'.
5. Fill out the Google profile for yourself (takes a minute).
6. When completed, the pop-up says "follow this blog publicly or anonymously". Choose your option, and you'll be an ISMTE blog follower.

## 2009 Meetings:

Information about the 2009 ISMTE meetings is available on the website ([www.ismte.org](http://www.ismte.org)). Meeting registration begins January 1, 2009.

*continued on page 16*

## ARTICLE

# Follow Your Yellow Brick Road

by Deborah Bowman, MFA  
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I am one of the lucky ones—those much-envied editors who get to work remotely. This has many advantages: I didn't have to move to another state to be near my journal office; I don't have to dress up every day; and I don't have to deal with office politics on a daily basis. But as I prepared to leave my job at Elsevier Publishing to become a managing editor working remotely for one of the journals I had worked on at Elsevier, I knew the news wasn't all good. I would be missing out on the daily friendships and camaraderie of an office environment, and as I prepared to make the change, I had a decision to make: should I work from home, all alone, or should I rent an office where I would have the opportunity to see and interact with people every day?

If you are in that situation or are already working from home, you might find yourself feeling a bit like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, dissatisfied with your surroundings, looking with longing toward the unknown which, in your case, would be an office apart

from your home. The decision to rent was made easier for me because I already had an office, about four miles from my house. My business partner and I rented it five years earlier, when we started our publishing company: we help people who want to self-publish.

Renting an office was surprisingly easy. We looked through the newspapers and called a realtor who handled a lot of business properties. He showed us several offices, and we chose a newly renovated building first constructed around the turn of the century—and I mean 1900, not 2000. It had been an old country general store in the early 1900s that stood next to the tracks in an old railroad town. Later it served as a variety of stores and later still, after most of the town was destroyed by a tornado, as a house whose suicidal inhabitant, it is rumored, still haunts the place. We were able to get a year-by-year lease, in case our business didn't work. I would advise trying to get a yearly lease so you aren't stuck renting for

## Yellow Brick Road

*continued*

three or five years if your situation changes.

So I already had an office, where I worked evenings and weekends. But still, I wondered: did I want to work at home, without distractions, and basically give up a room of my house (because, let's face it, even with a "paperless" workflow, paper still abounds), or at my office, where I knew I would have to close my door often and convince people that I was not available for visiting or playing?

As I debated the pros and cons of home versus office, I began to have vivid dreams at night. I dreamed I was working barefoot, but was unhappy. I dreamed I was arguing with people in my office, telling them they had to let me get my work done. Then I was sadly eating breakfast cereal from the bowl that used to be on my desk at Elsevier, offering candy and gum to co-workers. I dreamed of computers and toilets, and somehow they intermingled so that every time I flushed the toilet, an author was notified. (Okay, that last one was an apprehensive Editorial Manager dream—but I promise, I really dreamed it!)

In the end, I chose to work in my office, and overall, I am glad of my choice. Still, my concerns, at times, have proven to be legitimate. People

sometimes don't understand just because I don't have a supervisor standing over my shoulder, that doesn't mean I can take time off whenever they want me to, and I know those people wouldn't be around if I were holed up in my home. I often see the frown and puzzled expression when I say no, I can't take a two-hour lunch.

Would I do anything differently if I were renting an office today? In retrospect, I often wish my office were not next to a railroad track. I've had people on the phone ask me whether I'm talking from my car when a train is going by. I record the podcasts for my journal, but I can't do it from my often noisy office.

Don't rent next to a busy highway, a railroad, an airport, etc. Open the windows and try to imagine yourself actually working in that space before you sign a contract. If the office you are considering is part of a bigger building, you should also listen to your neighbors. This isn't like working in an editorial office where everybody shares the same types of goals. Other people won't understand what you are doing; they might have customers, including children, coming in just when you need it to be quiet. An office away from retail space is ideal. A pleasant, reserved insurance agent would

probably make a good work neighbor.

Each person, given the opportunity to work remotely, needs to weigh the options. Be honest about your work habits. Will you have difficulty working from home, where housework, hobbies, or television call out to you? If you are working from home, will you find you can't separate home from work and begin to feel like you are never leaving the job behind? Will you grow stir crazy staying in your house day after day? Do you have really cute clothes and a need to show them off? If any or all of these are true, you might want to consider renting an office. You might even find your society or editorial office is willing to pay part of the rent; after all, you are saving them money by not needing space at the main office.

Try working at an internet-equipped café or library for several days in a row. Do you look forward to leaving the house each day? Do you find the close proximity of a variety of odd characters to be a comfort rather than a distraction? Then you might be ready to expand your horizons and rent an office. Or maybe, after looking around, you'll gain a new appreciation for your home office and decide, with satisfaction, that there's no place like home after all. 🌐

# *View From the Other Side: An Editor's Perspective*

*by Dr. EK Tan,  
Associate Editor*

**European Journal of Neurology,  
Parkinsonism and Related Disorders, and  
Annals Academy of Medicine Singapore**

As a frequent contributor of scientific journals, I often whined about unreasonable peer reviewers, long review time, and, at times, poor service from some of the journals. There were occasions where I thought there was a 'conspiracy' for journals to choose what they wish to publish and the kind of authors to grace their publications. These untoward emotions and hostile perceptions were invariably colored by my own experiences, particularly when a paper of mine was rejected.

As authors, we all have our fair share of bad experiences. Even though time has provided me emotional distance, one specific instance has left an indelible scar on my memory. Once I submitted a paper containing data from an open-label drug study. The journal was unable to provide me with an update on the manuscript's status for several months. I wrote to the editor at about 6

months after the initial submission date and, to my horror, I was informed that the editorial office had lost my manuscript in their system! I was asked to resubmit the manuscript again, which I did. Less than 2 weeks subsequently, the manuscript was promptly rejected with just one peer reviewer's remark that as the study was not a double-blind placebo controlled trial, its value was limited. On this occasion, I thought the journal did not live up to my expectations as a responsible and respectable publication.

### *The Other Side*

I took up the appointment as associate editor for three different scientific journals (a general neurology, a general medical, and a subspecialty journal) at about the same time.

From the start, I have been

immensely enthusiastic and greatly motivated by a desire to serve the community and perhaps improve upon a system that I know may never be perfect. All three journals adopt a different on-line review system and target different readers, and I have been fortunate to work with scientific and managing editors who share and appreciate my efforts and energy. Because the problems and challenges of each of these journals varied somewhat, I have been able to apply the things I have learnt in one journal to another. Serving as an editor and a peer reviewer for other journals' review panels has also given me a better perspective and provided me a view "from the other side."

As an editor, one gets to view confidential comments from peer reviewers and sometimes hidden criticisms and remarks authors do not get to read. I must admit that in all

## *The Other Side*

*continued*

instances, I have never come across any discrimination or conspiracy to stifle the ambitions of any individual or group of authors. While there may be occasional conflicts of interest or bias, almost all reviewers are motivated by a desire to serve the community, and they play a cardinal role in raising the standard of scientific publications.

As an editor, I have also learnt that acceptance of a paper may not be based on the merits of the individual paper but it has to be judged in comparison with other submitted papers. With an acceptance rate of 30-50% for most journals, this is a challenge to communicate to authors whose papers may be excellent but yet not good enough to be accepted. All authors naturally feel passionate about their papers. Having enjoyed the view from different perspectives, I would encourage authors (including

myself) that one should not interpret negative reviews as personal attacks. Instead, one should focus on the constructive comments and suggestions that could further improve one's ability to conduct similar studies in the future.

With easy accessibility to online materials, most journals serve readers worldwide even if they have different target audiences. I see journal publishing as belonging to a part of the service industry. That means our readers are the customers and they should be our top priority. Regardless of which roles we take on in the editorial or publishing team, it is important to know what our readers want. A journal that is too obsessed with journal impact factors (IF) runs the risk of overlooking its primary objectives. However, in this real world of publication competition, one cannot ignore IF if one is to attract the best

papers. But a journal needs to balance service with the need to increase the IF. I see the fast processing times of a manuscript (easy submission, short interval between submission and initial editorial decision, and early online release upon manuscript acceptance), adaptability of a journal to the needs of readers, and ability of the editorial team to engage the authors on a more personal basis as key pillars of a journal's success. At the same time, authors need to appreciate the constraints journals operate under, and with realistic expectations, the experience of getting a paper published is more likely to be a pleasant one. 🌐

*The opinions expressed here are my own personal views and do not represent the official stand of the journals I serve.*

## ***Do you have public relations or marketing skills?***

The ISMTE Board of Directors is preparing promotional material for marketing the Society in 2009 and would appreciate advice from someone with these skills and experiences. If you can help, please contact ISMTE President Jason Roberts at [journal@ahsnet.org](mailto:journal@ahsnet.org) or Beverlee Anderson at [ISMTE@hughes.net](mailto:ISMTE@hughes.net).

# A Hanging Committee

By Gary Bryan

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It sounds deadly; it sounds scary; it sounds a bit harsh. Hey, it's only publishing. What am I talking about? (I often wonder myself.)

It all started in the late 1970s/early 1980s in BMA House, London, England. A very well-known editor of his time, Dr. Stephen Lock, was mulling over his desk pondering what articles to put into his beloved BMJ.

Each week the editor and his associates would meet up and discuss what was to be selected for future issues of the journal.

Back in the good old days we did not have computers – we had typewriters; we did not have electric – we had candles; we did not have XML – we had A3 size galley proofs. This is where we begin — each week the large pieces of paper would be hung up on the walls of the editor's large and lavish office with big

bulldog clips, and he and his associates would meet in the room and wander around reading the papers on the walls, drinking cups of tea. They would then have a discussion, throw the



rubbish on the floor and leave the good and righteous on the walls, ready to carry on the path to publication.

Somewhere just down the road in Piccadilly, the Royal Academy of Arts were doing the same thing but with pictures that had been openly submitted to the summer exhibition. Again, the critics walk around the rooms of the academy and review the works of art — I believe drinking something a little stronger than tea. They trash the bad and leave the good hanging, ready for its public viewing. This committee was called the 'hanging committee.'

So be it, the weekly editorial meetings at BMA House became the hanging committee and stayed for many years, even after Dr. Lock's departure. The word 'hang' still gets mentioned from time to time, but I am not so sure it has anything to do with a peer-review meeting. 🌐

## Section Editors Needed

*EON* needs editors for several new sections debuting in 2009. These sections will publish six to eight times each year, and each will cover a different topic such as ethics, publisher and society relationships, technology, editorial

office issues, and portraits of an editorial office.

Section editors will be responsible for recruiting content for their columns. *EON's* editorial staff will offer ideas and potential author

contacts as needed.

If you are interested in giving a small amount of time to help *EON* grow, please contact the Editor, Kristie Overstreet, at [kristen.overstreet@mac.com](mailto:kristen.overstreet@mac.com).

## *Protocols for the Editorial Office*

*by Glenn Collins*  
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There are almost literally 1,001 things to do from submission to the final publication of a manuscript. With so many steps and so much detail I am sure that many of you have, from time to time, written down how to do some of the more complicated tasks. Perhaps you did it as a reminder to yourself, especially for those tasks you do not perform regularly, or perhaps you did it in anticipation of a new person who will need to know the rules. What you may want to do though is take some time to go through these and change your scribbles and half-finished Word documents into a comprehensive set of instructions on how to run your office. Taking a cue from the quality control systems like ISO 9000 it can be very helpful to develop a protocol for every major and minor activity your staff will undertake in the office. Not only will you have exact documentation for how to check in a new submission, a revised manuscript, or invite a peer reviewer for a *de novo* revision that will certainly help both experienced and new staff alike, the development of such protocols can really give your staff some ownership into how the office is run.

When we first started our office in late 2001 there were four of us and only two of us had ever worked on a journal before. We were inheriting a publication that, beginning in 2002, was switching from 12 to 24 issues per

year. We were signing up for the first time an online submission system to handle over 2,000 submissions per year while setting up a physical office as well. It was a crowded time, and one of our first decisions was to make sure we were all on the same page, particularly the people with no publishing experience, with how we did things. At the same time I was keenly aware that I was likely to see high turnover among my editorial assistants. This is not unusual, especially in a small office where the opportunities to move up the ladder can be limited and the people hired tend to be in their 20s and still searching for what they want to do with their lives.

The creation of a system of protocols met both objectives. With the very first submission we began writing our "How to check in a new manuscript" protocol, and with each new step we reached (say when someone first appealed a decision) we wrote a new one ("How to process an appeal-letter only or letter and revised manuscript"). As of this writing we have well over 60 active protocols and 12 relegated to obsolete (but saved for future reference). At first the writing was done mainly by the two experienced hands, but it was quickly taken over by the new people. By writing the protocols they were forced to examine their tasks from every angle and quite often the writing out of the steps led to coming up with

improvements and new ideas on how to run things. By going back periodically to revise the protocols, they use their experience to see now how they would do the same tasks better.

***The Process***

When management determines a protocol is needed, we discuss who is in the best position to write it. That person or persons then completes a draft, almost always just text, no diagrams or figures, and passes it around for feedback. We add our edits, and the final version is approved by myself or the senior managing editor in charge of production, depending on what area the protocol falls under. It is then saved in our shared drive in a folder for protocols and given a simple, uniform title (e.g. How to invite peer reviewers, How to check in an invited review paper, etc.) to make it easy to find. Training a new employee then becomes a matter of going over the protocols

and showing them in what order they will do them until they have them down well. To update a protocol, the person or people using it determine when a change is needed based on new information or circumstances, bring it up with management for approval, write the new steps, and save it.

Seven years into our operation now I am proud to say that I do not know all the steps to checking in a revised manuscript, a protocol I originally wrote. However, someone starting here today can follow our protocol from day one and get it right. And the protocol has been written and rewritten by no fewer than five editorial assistants over the past seven years, all contributing their insight into the process. In the end the protocols are like an open source operating system, constantly evolving into a more perfect set of instructions for everyone.



***Thank you! ISMTE would like to thank the following companies for sponsoring memberships:***



*American Chemical Society*



both sides of the Atlantic. Taylor Bowen and Alice Ellingham deserve immense credit for making the meetings a success in a very short period of time. Lesson learned: never, *ever*, attempt to organize a meeting on such short notice again, unless you enjoy tear-your-hair-out levels of stress....and I had no hair before these meetings.

We have our 2009 meetings planned already, 8 months ahead of when they convene. As a member, you will receive your invitation to attend this month (December). Close to 70 people attended one, or both, meetings, and a sizable proportion of the attendees went on to become members. Witnessing a room full of complete strangers get together for the first time to share ideas and build professional acquaintances was, for me, a highlight of this first year for our fledgling organization. Many of you, I know, wanted to attend but could not. I hope you can join us, therefore, in August 2009 in Oxford, United Kingdom, or Baltimore in the United States.

### *Defining Ourselves*

After the meetings, we started to create some buzz, and the next couple of months saw a lot of time devoted to defining ourselves to publishers and vendors alike. Out of that, we were able to ensure several members joined from publishers such as Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford University Press, Informa/Taylor & Francis, and the American Chemical Society. We also received some support from Aries Systems, providers of Editorial Manager in recognition of the important role they felt we could play in enhancing professional skills. These skills, of course, could be converted into

more powerful system users.

With so much to achieve in the first third of the year, we delayed forming a Board of Directors with an associated formal committee structure. When attention was directed to our administrative structure, the Board and committee chairs quickly came together from amongst those who had worked hard to launch ISMTE. The Board was charged with developing bylaws and setting up a development plan to direct the Society over the next three or so years. The preceding sentence effectively reduces hundreds of hours of work into a few words that do not begin to reflect the amount of effort, ideas, and talent that enabled the society to define itself and where it is going.

A tremendous amount of work lies ahead in developing resources for members, laying on opportunities to converse with peers, and defining the standards we should hold if we wish to call ourselves professionals. There are plenty of committee roles that need to be filled – if you interested in helping, please either contact the committee chair or Donna Schena, volunteer coordinator. It should be noted that in 2009, our first election process for certain positions will commence. Committee work represents *the* opportunity to establish a track record of supporting the Society.

The summer months saw many new members join through word of mouth. We also received several requests from publishers and other societies involved in scholarly and professional publishing to write summaries on who we are and what we do. When member benefits are touted in such summaries, the availability of a monthly newsletter, *EON*, usually heads the list. By June 2008, our

excellent editor, Kristie Overstreet, and her team had received so many commitments to write, a decision was made to convert *EON* into a monthly publication. The quality of the material published, the caliber of the authors, and the sheer volume of content really are outstanding. How many other professional societies, small in scale and in their infancy deliver this? From reading *EON* I've learned several new techniques I can apply to daily practice, heard some interesting perspectives on the future direction of publishing (see November's issue), and gained some insights into what goes on in other editorial offices. The latter is probably the feature I turn to first when each new issue of *EON* appears online.

Slowly, but surely, the ISMTE Discussion Forum has emerged as a major source of information or, simply, for quick answers. Katy Ladbroke is one of the unsung heroes of ISMTE and has performed wonders keeping the forum afloat, with some assistance from Flory Ferns-James. I love the depth of the answers simple questions receive. Without doubt, the single most important piece of practical advice I learned, thanks to my membership in ISMTE, came via a posting from Erin Dubnansky and her team at the American Gastroenterological Association in regard to developing podcasts. More journals are looking at enhancing their online presence. The largest titles have been providing podcasts for a while, but there is no tried-and-true method for the successful launch of a podcast service. One or two members, myself included, have been wrestling with how to develop podcasts on a shoestring budget. Several members responded to the call for ideas by relating their own experiences and research.

This strikes me as exactly how a good discussion forum should work.

By the autumn months, despite being a small society, the operational scale of ISMTE was such that we needed to rethink management strategies. Amazingly, the solution lay from within, in the form of Beverlee Anderson, one of the first members to join ISMTE. Beverlee, quietly enjoying life in beautiful Santa Fe, New Mexico, had only recently assumed editorial office responsibilities at the journal for the Society for Simulation in Healthcare after years of providing executive direction for emerging societies. It is ISMTE's good fortune to benefit from the considerable expertise of a professional society director. In the first few weeks after Beverlee's appointment, the transformation in approach, efficiency of operation, and counsel offered has been quite remarkable. Best of all, though she is now our Executive Director, she still runs an editorial office. Her motivations for making ISMTE a success are very real.

### *The Future*

So, what lies ahead for 2009? Expect to see new initiatives come to fruition: the job bank; resources that will help your daily practice; initiatives to try and get individuals together, especially if local clusters exist; and the development of new training courses. I am hoping we will also be able to develop a greater presence in the Asia-Pacific region and eventually be in a position to offer a local meeting. As has been the case this year, the website will be the focal point of all Society activities. One new feature I am particularly looking forward to seeing will be the blog that

will feature musings, anecdotes, and observations from within various editorial offices.

For many of you who have experienced the last year with ISMTE, this litany of events is probably common knowledge. Many members, however, are new. As a result I want to make sure that everyone:

- signs up for the Discussion Forum – please take the time to contribute your wisdom (though, of course, its OK to ‘lurk’),
- takes the time to review back issues of *EON*,
- signs up for the meetings in 2009,
- uses ISMTE as a springboard to launch local get-togethers (either in person or virtually),
- offers comments on the ISMTE blog or offers to take on the blog editor role for a week or two,
- volunteers time to help support the vital work of the committees,
- does all he or she can to spread the word about ISMTE: tell as many people as

possible,

- and finally, if you haven't done so already, renew your membership for 2009.

As a good managing editor should be, I am conscious of page space. Its prudent, therefore, if I thank everyone who has given up time to support us in 2008 collectively rather than individually. I never imagined keeping even a small society going would require so much work, especially to do it right. I am also very thankful for all the wonderful new professional acquaintances I have made. It is a pleasure to meet and learn from so many talented individuals.

Best wishes for 2009.

Jason

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***We offer our gratitude to Sage and Aries Systems for their support of ISMTE!***



## *Does Your Editorial Board Know Who You Are?*

*by Kristen Overstreet, EON Editor*  
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I had three editorial board meetings scheduled for the week of November 3, 2008. It always interests me to watch the way different editorial boards work and interact.

The Editor-in-Chief (EIC) and I had a very simple agenda for one of the meetings: rewrite the mission statement for the journal. Well, you're right, that's not simple, except from the standpoint that it was a one-item agenda.

We began working on the new mission statement by e-mail following a conference call in which it became evident the editorial board was not sure what the Journal's aims and scope were. What?! The EIC and I were amazed. The mission statement is listed at the top of our home page, and a whole page on the site is dedicated to the Journal's aims and scope. I wanted to scream, 'What do you mean you don't know what the aims and scope of the journal are? Who are you and what have you done with our Board?'

After discussion with the EIC, I realized that what was so obvious to us was not obvious to our Board, and we needed to make their understanding of the Journal's mission a top priority; thus the e-mail discussion and the one-item agenda at our face-to-face meeting.

Through the e-mail discussions, we had the mission statement well crafted when the meeting began; but I was still concerned the meeting would turn into a wordsmithing session that would take us beyond our time constraints. (This would be reminiscent of the ISMTE Board meeting in August when we crafted the mission statement for ISMTE. Nine editors in a room trying to agree on the wording of something that important could cause a run on antacids in the

hotel gift shop. It did take us some time, but the ISMTE mission statement is something I'm very proud of and is definitely a product of the talents of each of the nine editors. I wouldn't change a thing about the statement or the process.)

Some amount of wordsmithing occurred at this particular editorial board meeting, too, and it, too, resulted in a better final draft of the statement. This statement will soon be uploaded onto the website and printed in the Journal.

The statement is not significantly different from the original, but this one is vastly improved from the standpoint that it has the editorial board's buy-in. They were made part of the process, and in that process, they came to understand and own the mission statement and aims and scope of the Journal.

It was a good lesson for me. Over time, as members move on and off editorial boards, the board as a whole changes, and the board's understanding of what a journal's mission is may also change. Revisiting the mission statements and aims and scopes of my journals with their editorial boards will now become a maintenance item for me. I will set a timeline (yet to be determined) for reviewing these items with the boards to assess their understanding, buy-in, and need for change as the journals grow.

A few months ago, I believed I should be able to expect an editorial board member would know the mission statement and aims and scope of the journal he or she was serving. I have learned from this experience, however, that making sure my editorial board members understand and accept these items is part of my job as the managing editor. 

## *My Dream Job, Or Something Like It*

by Christina Sullivan  
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If someone had told me a couple of years ago I would be here today, working at a peer-reviewed medical journal (*Gastrointestinal Endoscopy*, no less!), I probably would have laughed, or perhaps eyed them suspiciously for signs of lunacy. After all, I wasn't just any ordinary college graduate looking for a job. I was... drumroll, please... an *English* major. I was determined to work in the publishing industry, preferably in a position where my job would consist of reading novels all day and passing judgment on them. Imagine my surprise and dismay when I realized this job doesn't typically exist for recent graduates with a bachelor's degree in English. "The horror!" as Joseph Conrad would say.

Not only was I having difficulty finding my dream job, but I was having trouble finding any job in book publishing. Frustrated, I eventually accepted a job at an insurance company that was completely unrelated to my interests and talents. I quickly realized I could not endure an unfulfilling job no matter how well it paid. After a few months I had made an important decision: I would never again stay at a job where I couldn't play to my strengths or didn't feel like I was making a contribution. So, in the end, what had been a bad first job (for me, at least) wound up teaching me a very important lesson about what I wanted from my career.

The job hunt began again, and this time I approached opportunities with a new openness

and confidence. When I began looking beyond all of the obvious avenues for a publishing career, I realized that working at a journal might be the way to go—I would get tons of great experience and have the chance to work with authors, editors, and publishers. I have to admit when I accepted the job at *Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (GIE)*, I was apprehensive—after all, I didn't know anything about gastroenterology or endoscopy, and wasn't sure I wanted to.

That was only three months ago, and I can't begin to describe all the things I have learned in such a short time. I am incredibly lucky because I have a completely supportive managing editor who is patient with all of my questions, and I was trained by the former editorial assistant, who took the time to fully explain the different aspects of the position.

The different facets of this position are numerous. It would be difficult to describe a typical day in the editorial office of *GIE* because every day presents new challenges. There are a few things that remain consistent, however. When I get into the office each morning, I answer e-mails and phone messages from authors, reviewers, and sometimes editors concerning articles and other journal issues. It's very rewarding to be able to help an author submit an article or answer a question for a reviewer because their work is so important to them. I've found that the endoscopists and gastroenterologists that work with the journal

## *Dream Job*

*continued*

are an incredibly friendly, vibrant, and good-humored group of doctors. Helping them with even the simplest issues, whether it is finding a specific article or solving a computer glitch, is a joy because they are always so kind and grateful. I've also enjoyed talking to doctors from all over the world because it shows me our journal has a truly global reach and our impact is becoming increasingly international.

Next on the agenda for my day is assigning the articles that have been submitted overnight to editors and sending out letters to authors when decisions are made on their manuscripts. I typically check back throughout the day to assign articles that come in, and send out gentle reminders to editors and reviewers that fall behind with their tasks. When I've finished the daily routine, things can get interesting. Since I started here, no two days have been exactly the same. There is always one project or another that needs attention. Admittedly, some are pretty mundane, but most are challenging in some aspect, whether it be conception or implementation. One of the best things that I can say about my work here is that I am definitely never bored.

The editorial office of *GIE* is unique in a few different ways. The first thing that sets us apart, and probably the thing that affects me most, is the fact that Deborah, the managing editor, and I work 300 miles apart, and the editor-in-chief works from the other side of the country. Now, you may be asking, "Most of the time I think my boss and I are on two different planets; what's the big deal about two different states?" All joking aside, I think that

it's a testament to our ability to work well together that we can collaborate and operate the journal out of two different offices. I also believe that it speaks to Deborah's ability to manage various projects with clarity and vision, allowing me to anticipate and be prepared to do whatever she may ask of me. On a recent trip to Deborah's office, while working side by side, we both remarked how nice it was to be able to turn around and talk out some problems face to face. I told a friend this and she said, "I can't imagine wishing that my boss was around more." I laughed, but it made me realize what a unique (and great!) work environment I have.

Another thing that makes the editorial office of *GIE* unique is that I work out of the offices of the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy. Working in an association environment is very different from working in the corporate sector. The member-focused philosophy keeps the entire staff working toward shared goals, which obviously promotes everyone working together to get things done for the members. The positive "can-do" attitude in the office is extremely helpful and beneficial to the journal. This outlook permeates everything we do in the office, and I think that it's apparent when you look at some of the things that the Society has done, including the publication of the journal every month.

Not only do I have a great working environment here at the office, but as I said before, I get to work with people from all over the country and world. I'm looking forward to traveling more to different parts of the

*continued on page 16*

## Calendar of Events

### **ALPSP - How To Be a Successful Editor**

29-30 January 2009  
Oxford, UK  
[www.alpsp.org](http://www.alpsp.org)

### **ALPSP - The Journal Editorial Office**

11 February 2009  
Oxford, UK  
[www.alpsp.org](http://www.alpsp.org)

### **Council of Science Editors**

1-5 May 2009  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA  
[www.councilscienceeditors.org/events/annualmeeting09/index.cfm](http://www.councilscienceeditors.org/events/annualmeeting09/index.cfm)

### **ALPSP - Effective Journal Editorial Management**

12 May 2009  
London, UK  
[www.alpsp.org](http://www.alpsp.org)

### **ALPSP - Journal Development**

24 June 2009  
London, UK  
[www.alpsp.org](http://www.alpsp.org)

### **ISMTE European Conference**

August 25, 2009  
Oxford, UK  
[www.ismte.org](http://www.ismte.org)

### **International Academy of Nursing Editors**

26-28 July 2009  
Chicago, Illinois, USA  
[www.nursingeditors.org](http://www.nursingeditors.org)

### **ALPSP - Commissioning Book and Journal Content**

25 November 2009  
London, UK  
[www.alpsp.org](http://www.alpsp.org)

### **6th International Congress on Peer Review & Biomedical Publication**

10-12 September 2009  
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada  
[www.ama-assn.org/public/peer/peerhome.htm](http://www.ama-assn.org/public/peer/peerhome.htm)

### **European Association of Science Editors**

10th EASE General Assembly and Conference  
16-19 September 2009  
Pisa, Italy  
<http://www.ease.org.uk/easeconfdocs/1stCircular-2009.pdf>

### **Updates continued from page 2**

**Members Only:** The Members Only section of the website is available again, offering you access to previous issues of *EON*.

**Membership Renewal:** You will be able to pay online for your membership

renewal. Watch your e-mail for a membership renewal reminder.

### **Tell a Friend About ISMTE:**

A new promotional brochure is available on the website on the Membership and Members Only pages to download and pass along to colleagues.

## *Dream Job* *continued*

country and meeting with the people that make the journal possible—doctors, editors, etc. It reminds me that although the address of the journal office is in Oak Brook, Illinois, in reality, our office spans the United States. It gives a unique perspective to someone like me, who is just starting out in this industry.

As you can probably tell, I truly enjoy my job at *GIE*. When I made the decision to seek a job that would allow me to use my strengths and talents, I wasn't sure what that would mean for me. But every day at *GIE* has presented me with the opportunity to showcase my talents and challenge myself. It is a great place to learn for someone starting out and offers lots of great opportunities for growth. And even though I don't get to sit and read novels everyday, I usually have time for a chapter or two at lunch. 🌐

## **Membership Renewal**

The membership committee is implementing our first membership-renewal campaign. The good news is that we intend to freeze the price for our second year of business at US \$135. Compared to other professional organizations in the publishing world, this rate represents a clear bargain. With a whole suite of new features to be offered plus the ability to take advantage of discounted member rates to attend the ISMTE 2009 meetings in Oxford and Baltimore, a 2009 membership subscription to ISMTE will represent even greater **value for money**.

Please consider renewing as soon as possible to ensure continued access to the many benefits and resources that contribute to your professional success.

If you have any questions regarding membership, do contact Wendy Krank, ISMTE's volunteer membership coordinator at [headachecurrents@qwest.net](mailto:headachecurrents@qwest.net) or the ISMTE Executive Office at [ismte@hughes.net](mailto:ismte@hughes.net).

### ISMTE *EON*

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