

Column: *President's Message*



Image via Wikipedia

I thought of sending each of you a valentine from ISMTE saying 'Will you be mine?' or 'We make a great pair.' But that's really not my style. 'I want you' is more like it. Not like that—but like the US military of old, seeking recruits.

ISMTE has myriad opportunities for members to use their expertise in writing, editing,

Web editing, meeting planning, teaching, marketing, fundraising, etc.

We need every member's talents and skills to advance the society's goal of enhancing the professionalism of editorial office staff by providing networking and training infrastructure, establishing best practices, and studying and reporting on editorial office practices.

We've met you, either electronically or at our meetings, and we know you've got a lot to offer. Don't hold back—get involved!

Contact ISMTE at ismteoffice@gmail.com. Expect details of specific needs in future communications from the Society.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Blalock
President-Elect, ISMTE
Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA
blalock@sidnet.org

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ISMTE Annual Meetings - 2010

The location of the US meeting has changed from Alexandria, VA, to Washington, DC. The dates remain exactly the same. The meeting will now be held at the American College of Cardiology's headquarters also known as Heart House. Ideally situated near the neighborhood of Georgetown, Heart House offers an ideal spot for all meeting activities. Information will be forthcoming on nearby hotels.

For the US meeting we are pleased to announce our keynote speaker will be **John Sack**, the Associate Publisher and Director of HighWire Press. John is one of the foremost thinkers in the STM publishing world and, to quote their website (<http://highwire.stanford.edu/team-bio.dtl?id=sack&t=leadership>), John's 'role is to determine where the technology and publishing industries are going, how one of

those might leverage the other, and how HighWire can best support its customers—publishers, editors—and its customers'

customers—the libraries, students, researchers, and clinicians they serve.' We are very fortunate to have John join us for our meeting.

The rest of the meeting's schedule continues to come together. Be on the lookout for future updates.

Please note important location change for US Meeting.

Click here to see the conference agendas:

www.ismte.org/2010_Conferences

Planning continues for the UK Meeting as well. New information will be presented in this space in each issue of *EON*, and, of course, on the website: www.ismte.org.



Washington, DC

August 3-4, 2010 with an opening reception and registration the evening of August 2.

Oxford

October 19, 2010 at St. Hugh's College.

The Changing of the Guard

by **Deborah Bowman**

Managing Editor
Gastrointestinal Endoscopy
dbowman@asge.org

Woodrow Wilson once said, 'If you want to make enemies, try to change something.' Many people resist change, but if you are a managing editor, chances are you experience a radical change regularly when your journal's editor-in-chief and associate editors cycle off. If you are one of the lucky managing editors who gets to keep your job when the rest of the editorial team changes, you will not only have to deal with a massive change, but might even be put in charge of parts of it.

For *GIE: Gastrointestinal Endoscopy*, this happens every five years. As of January 2010 we have a new editor-in-chief, who chose a new bank of associate editors to work with him. The saga began, however, about one-and-a-half years ago. We are a society journal, so the society, with the help of a consultant, advertised we were beginning the process of looking for a new editor. Applications and CVs were submitted and a date for interviews was set up. For simplicity's sake, the interviews were all held on the same day.

Initially, I wasn't going to be a part of the process of choosing the new editor, but I asked whether I could sit in on the interviews. They decided I could be the 'secretary,' taking notes for the day. I didn't have a vote, but they did ask my opinion and listened to it respectfully, which was extremely valuable; after all, I would be the one working with this new person most closely. They also had me phone in (and again, take notes) during the organizational conference calls that led up to the interview

day. In addition, I got to submit questions that they asked the applicants; a couple of things were at the top of my list that the committee hadn't even considered, such as e-mail habits (How often do you tend to check it?) and work habits (Do you intend to dedicate time to the editorship daily? weekly? monthly?). If you are going through this process, I recommend you ask whether you can attend the interviews; at the very least, you will find yourself feeling grateful certain candidates *weren't* chosen! The interviews took place a full year before the new editor began his official term of office.

Over the next several months, the governing board approved the committee's choice and the new editor-to-be chose his team of associate editors. We held a meeting in June in the society's hometown, with the new editor and the publisher, so the incoming editor could air his ideas and expectations. At this time, he let us know what changes he had in mind, and we discussed how to implement them. We also had a meeting with the new editor at the publisher's New York offices in the fall, where they attempted to dazzle us with sleight of hand and initiatives designed to keep managing editors busier than ever. Do you Twitter? Shouldn't you do more author interviews? Your Facebook page could be more competitive. Why not post a 'Question of the Month' on your website?

I was asked by the head of the society's communications department to set up a transition plan for the new team; we wanted to

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continued

ease the editors in before the old team was cut loose. My plan was, for the month of August 2009, half of the new submissions would go to the old team and half to the new; that way, the new people weren't overwhelmed all at once. (Last year we had 1,744 new submissions, divided among 12 associate editors, so it's not a small job!) Then, starting September 1, all new submissions went to the new team, and the old team handled the articles they already had, including any revisions that came in for their articles.

To prepare for this transition, I created and led a webinar. In case you don't know, this means I was able to take control of all of their computers so they could see what I was doing, even though we were located all over the world. The bulk of the webinar consisted of leading them through our online submission system; I showed them where to find their assignments, how to invite reviewers, how to set decisions, and everything in between; the program lasted just over an hour. This proved to be tremendously helpful. Even though they had many follow-up questions as they began working, they had a solid basis for starting their jobs. I held the webinar a week before they were assigned any articles, so they wouldn't forget everything, and held it two times (morning and evening), so everyone would be able to attend one of the sessions. I also sent everyone a follow-up PowerPoint explaining the process again, using screen shots and bullet points, thus giving them cheat sheets for the weeks to come.

We always hold an editors' meeting in the fall, and we decided even though the new team hadn't officially taken over yet, the 2009 fall meeting should belong to the new team. This took place in October, so they had been handling articles just long enough by that time to have lots of questions...and ideas. That, I think, is one of the most challenging things for

a managing editor to deal with: trying to explain why some of their 'great' ideas just won't work, and trying to implement those that are good, such as sending a separate, formal acceptance letter on GIE letterhead, suitable for including in an author's CV; circulating articles among all of the editors before sending acceptance letters so any of them can protest a decision; finding ways to recruit and reward reviewers; and setting up the online system to inform all reviewers of the final decisions, along with sending unlabeled copies of the other reviews, in the hope of improving reviews overall. My workload grows daily, and I eagerly await the day their enthusiasm wanes.

Every Monday I have a morning conference call with the issue manager, the editor-in-chief, and the publisher, and once per month the call includes all of the associate editors as well. Beginning in August, those calls included both the old and new teams, giving the new team a chance to ask questions and to benefit from the old team's experience and expertise.

The outgoing editor was honored at the editors' reception at our specialty's annual conference. He was awarded a beautiful plaque and a number of the doctors were allowed to give short tributes to him (almost, but not quite, a roast). It was a lot of fun and was the best attended reception we've ever had.

The changeover officially happened on January 1, 2010, but the difference was almost imperceptible. Any of the old team's revisions that came back after January 1 were assigned to a member of the new team, but because we had the transition period, those numbered in the single digits. The outgoing editor had an editorial in the December issue, saying good-bye and thanks, and the new editor had one in the January issue, outlining his vision. We also had the new editor record a video introducing

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continued

himself and talking about the changes he will be making. We put this video on the journal's website, on YouTube, and on Facebook. (Become a Facebook fan of GIE: Gastrointestinal Endoscopy!)

So it is good-bye Dr. Triadafilopoulos, hello Dr. Eisen. (I can hear you out there...at least the new editor's name is easier to pronounce!)

The process has been a change and a challenge, but I am proud to say it all went smoothly. Now I have five years before I have to go through it again. Well, four years until the interviews. Three-and-a-half until we start advertising. Aargh!



SOCIETY UPDATE

Follow-up to Our First NC Local Group Meeting

In the February issue, I discussed our process for creating a local group in the Society update article, 'Establishing a Local Group of ISMTE Members.'

When we last left you, the e-mail was prepared and ready to go to people in my local area. With the help of Leslie McGeoch, ISMTE's executive director, an e-mail was sent two weeks prior to the meeting and a follow-up e-mail was sent one week prior to the meeting. We received about 13 RSVPs, which made 14 of us for lunch: I was delighted by the turnout.

Elizabeth Blalock, our ISMTE president, introduced herself and said a bit about the Society, its aims and goals. Then I took over and introduced myself and talked about the local group's goals, which I stressed were extremely fluid. We held a straw poll and agreed to meet every second month, to keep the structure of the meetings informal, not to have speakers or invited guests at this stage, but rather to keep the meetings a more social

gathering where people can ask for advice, air concerns about work-related issues and, in general, chat. We spent about 2 hours socializing and mingling over a very nice lunch and agreed to meet in the same place again, as it was handy for most people.

So in summary, our meeting achieved one of my main goals: to network and socialize with people in the same line of work and get me out of my home office!

Thanks to everyone who turned up and we plan to have our next meeting in April 2010 (e-mail to follow). Anyone who is interested in setting up a local group should contact Leslie McGeoch at the ISMTE office [ismteoffice@gmail.com] or me, as I am happy to share my experiences personally, too.

Jan McColm, PhD
 Managing Editor
Genetics in Medicine
jmccolm@med.unc.edu

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Interested in supporting ISMTE? Please visit <http://ismte.org/supporters.html>

ISMTE is now on LinkedIn

An ISMTE Group has been created in LinkedIn. If you are already a LinkedIn user, simply join the group and make connections with your peers. If you are new to LinkedIn, it only takes a second to join and it's free.

To find the ISMTE group go to www.Linkedin.com. Then from your profile page, go to the search box in the upper-right. It defaults to the People search setting. Use the down arrow to pull up the menu options and select Group, as in the example below:

When you have located the ISMTE group (search using 'International Society of Managing and Technical Editors') click **Join This Group**, fill out any specifications regarding notifications of updates, then hit the blue **Join Group** button. When you have joined, make sure you take time to set up connections with your peers.

Contact Information for ISMTE

Leslie McGeoch, Executive Director

International Society of Managing and Technical Editors

1107 Mantua Pike Ste. 701 # 122, Mantua, New Jersey, USA 08051-1606

Phone: +1 856 292 8512, Fax: +1 856 292 8513

E-mail: ismteoffice@gmail.com

Behind the Scenes at the BMJ Specialist Journals Titles

by Francesca Brand
Editorial Assistant, BMJ
FBrand@bmjgroup.com

My interest in publishing began when I had just finished my GCSEs and realized my strongest point, throughout my education, had been English. Ironic, I felt, as I was raised in a Latin American household and grew up with Spanish as my first language. However, I think being raised surrounded by literature probably had a big hand in my choice!

Leaving university in 2005 with an English and Creative Writing degree, I entered the working world soon after and, not having worked full-time in an office before, I decided to start gradually, first going for smaller jobs, which came around easily and would help me gain the skills I needed to step into the field I wanted. The publishing field can be a challenge to enter, so I wanted to try to cover as many bases as possible before taking the plunge; experience first, I told myself, was essential.

After a year or so of temping and working one full-time job, I signed up to a number of agencies to finally begin pursuing a fixed career path in the area of my choice.

I remember the interview I had with my last recruitment agency very well. I was informed of a position at a publishing company, which was ideal for a 'starter with some experience' like me. 'But it's in medicine,' I was told. 'Are you interested in medicine?'

I remember thinking I didn't want to pass

up a good opportunity just because I didn't have much experience in that field, so I paused (for the above thought), then responded, 'I could be.'

Thus, I embarked on a journey working at the BMJ as editorial assistant. After a short while, I realized two things: first, this was definitely the career path I wanted to follow; second, my lack of medical experience didn't make the work itself any less fascinating.

This is an ideal role for a starter with experience and an interest in literature and publishing. In the specialist journals department, there are approximately 30 journals distributed among a number of editorial assistants (in-house employees and out-of-house freelancers). Personally, I work with four journals (one large and three smaller ones), as well as any that require cover when another editorial assistant is away.

In this role, I work closely with authors, out-of-house editors, and the journals' teams (production editors, journal managers, and publishers—all based in-house) on a daily basis, to ensure papers are processed quickly and smoothly and issues are brought out on time. All papers are handled via the electronic tracking system, which sustains a number of advantages, one being that it reduces the amount of paperwork needed for processing each article; thus it is extremely eco-friendly. All actions carried out on the papers, if done

properly, are fully recorded in one place, allowing us to track the papers' full progress. It also ensures the entire editorial process is much smoother as long as there aren't any hiccoughs, which there rarely are if maintained well.

My job involves supervising the submitted papers from start to finish, making sure they're not lost in an abyss, from when an author prepares to submit the paper, along to assignment, through review, then onto the final processes.

Once fully accepted, the papers are then sent to a final queue (Check for Deficiencies) where we ensure everything, including the files themselves, is suitable for the typesetter, and then send it on. Once an article is sent off to the external typesetters, the production team members take over, and at this stage, we work with them to ensure the paper is processed without too much delay. Each journal is assigned to a production editor (two or more journals to each member of the team), and they'll refer back to us if the typesetter spots a problem (e.g., the figures are not correct) so we can contact the author for modifications.

Working with such varying journals, the editorial assistants have a range of different routines to carry out with each one. Some journals have us corresponding overseas to our editors, others have us pulling up reports on a weekly basis or interacting with the editors daily via e-mail and meeting with them weekly as they visit the office.

One of my journals requires my editor to come in-house for the day, once a week, for an editorial committee meeting, which he and two other editors use to discuss papers currently being processed.

Because all the editors for the specialist

journals work out-of-house, we need to report to them regularly on the status of the journals' queues and the papers available for processing. The editor mentioned above handles the biggest journal I work with, published twice a month, so having him come in helps us keep him informed of exactly what's in the system; we can also reassure him when all is well and notify him when any papers need to be pushed through ASAP. The Tuesday meetings are thus used to speed up the final decision process and enable us to send the papers out.

Having frequent correspondence with the editors helps us develop a bond with each of them, enabling us to work together much more efficiently. It helps us work well as a team, especially if the editorial group knows how a particular editor likes to work and needs to handle their requests as soon as possible. It also makes going out for after-meeting dinners far more interesting and for great social gatherings!

However, it is not all tracking systems and e-mail correspondence. Working on these journals involves the editorial team having a far more direct involvement with all aspects of the journal. For example, I've been fortunate enough to fly to Orlando in the USA for a week to attend a conference and exhibit. There are also Christmas dinners and launch parties to attend for the latest journal won in a bid.

With a growing company come opportunities. In the two years I have been here, so much has changed and my role has developed a great deal. A year or so ago, due to my work on the department newsletter, I was enlisted by the human resources department to join the editorial team for the company newsletter, sent out every other month,

helping design and arrange the general layout. As a consequence of working on these projects I have gained skills with Indesign and editor experience, which has improved my skills in publishing even further.

With the number of development courses available and the company constantly growing

and changing, even the smallest task can give employees the chance to advance. I look forward to what this year has to bring.



ISMTE ***EON***

EON is the official newsletter of the International Society for Managing and Technical Editors (ISMTE) and is published monthly. The contents and opinions expressed by the authors do not necessarily represent those of the Society, the Board of Directors, or *EON* editors, nor does the publication of an article constitute an endorsement on the part of ISMTE of the authors' organizations or companies. Submissions are welcome and can be sent to the editor at the address below. Submissions may be edited for style and format without the author's permission. Authors must seek permission to reprint any copyrighted material and provide this permission to the editor. *EON's* content belongs to the members of ISMTE. Users may view and download *EON* articles for personal, non-commercial use. Use beyond that allowed by the "Fair Use" limitations (sections 107 and 108) of the U.S. Copyright law require written permission from the *EON* editor.

Editor:

Kristen Overstreet

kristen.overstreet@mac.com

Associate Editors:

Susan Scalia

susan@awra.org

Emily Mueller

emueller@allenpress.com

Editorial Advisor:

Sirkka-Liisa Leinonen

sirkka-liisa.leinonen@pp.inet.fi

Section Editors:

Portraits: **Deborah Bowman**

dbowman@asge.org

Publication: **Jan McColm**

jmccolm@med.unc.edu

Ethics: **Ira Salkin**

Irasalkin@aol.com

A note on English: ISMTE aims to be a truly international society. English will represent our lingua franca, but we would like to stress that in materials published in EON or online that variations in idiomatic usage and spelling should reflect the origins of the author. No one version of English is preferred over the other.

ISMTE Executive Office: 107 Mantua Pike Ste. 701 # 122, Mantua, New Jersey, USA 08051-1606

Phone: +1 856 292 8512 Fax: +1 856 292 8513, E-mail: ismteoffice@gmail.com

Calendar of Events

Introduction to Journals Marketing

2 March 2010

London, UK
www.alpsp.org

How To Be a Successful Journal Editor

25-26 March 2010

Oxford, UK
www.alpsp.org

COPE Seminar

26 March 2010

London, UK
<http://publicationethics.org/>

Emerging Trends in Scholarly Publishing

8 April 2010

Washington, DC, USA
www.allenpress.com

ScholarOne User Conference

2-4 May 2010

Charlottesville, VA, USA

Introduction to Journals Publishing

4 May 2010

Washington, DC, USA
<http://alpsp.allenmm.com>

High Impact Online Marketing: How to Market Your Journals in the Era of Online Communities and Social Media Marketing

7 May 2010

Washington, DC, USA
<http://alpsp.allenmm.com>

Taking eBooks to Market

11 May 2010

London, UK
www.alpsp.org

Journal Development

11 May 2010

Washington, DC, USA
<http://alpsp.allenmm.com>

Council of Science Editors

14-18 May 2010

Atlanta, GA, USA
www.councilscienceeditors.org

Editorial Manager User Group Meeting

17-18 June 2010

Cambridge, MA, USA
www.editorialmanager.com

ISMTE US Conference

3-4 August 2010

Washington, DC, USA
www.ismte.org

International Academy of Nursing Editors

11-14 August 2010

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia
www.nursingeditors-inane.org/events.html

ISMTE UK Conference

19 October 2010

Oxford, UK
www.ismte.org

*Do you have an event to add to the calendar?
Contact the editor, kristen.overstreet@mac.com.*

EON is seeking *column editors* for the *Taming Technology and Tips & Tricks* columns. Column editors are responsible for recruiting their column's articles. If you are interested, please contact the Editor, Kristen Overstreet, at kristen.overstreet@mac.com. We look forward to working with you!