

From the Guest Editor



Blaire V Mossman

Shortly after becoming managing editor of my journals, I thought it might be helpful to take the Certificate Program in Editing and Publications at Georgetown University. I had not trained formally to run a publication office, and when I joined CBE I learned that many of my colleagues were similarly untrained. I began to wonder whether we primarily learned on the job.

The Certificate Program provided a useful introduction to the publication process, which made me feel somewhat better prepared to tackle the challenges of the profession. Thus equipped but naive, I soon realized the mechanical aspects, or "paper" problems, were nothing compared with the "people" problems. In the business of publishing peer-reviewed manuscripts, we first and foremost deal with people in all their delicate complexity. Some days my office operates as a giant complaint department, as I am sure yours does too.

Effective managing editors are patient, diplomatic, tactful, and fair. These qualities are indispensable in dealing with editors-in-chief, referees, authors, publishers, vendors—all the people with whom we interact and resolve conflicts on a daily basis. It helps to be well organized, self-motivated, and flexible enough to accommodate whatever circumstances may be at hand.

CBE Views is fortunate to have contributors who bring a wealth of experience to this special issue. Their different backgrounds and work histories offer a variety of viewpoints about technical aspects of managing the editorial office. Gary Smith, a technical editor turned managing editor, introduces us to the editorial office and offers a number of practical recommendations for its smooth running. Stephanie Medlock leads us on a tour of educational programs in publishing. Lew Gidez's executive odyssey spans his experience from scientist/editor to director of publications at FASEB. Leilyn Perri takes us inside the *Health Physics* journal and shares his point of view as a former reporter and news director.

How do African editors train? In the Features section of this issue, Helen van Houten explores some programs in which she has participated in Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia. Murrie Burgan reflects on the Rockefeller Institute program and its implications for training editors. The Dialogue articles look at the recruiting and training of a managing editor from 2 perspectives: Mark Dyken of *Stroke* describes his transition from physician to editor-in-chief in search of a managing editor, while Marilyn Yurk, managing editor of *Stroke*, challenges CBE to provide more programs in support of managing editors.

We offer these observations and welcome your reactions to them. We encourage CBE to hold a Short Course for Managing Editors similar to the Short Course for Journal Editors and the Short Course for Manuscript Editors. Cheryl Iverson, chair of the CBE Education Committee, welcomes your suggestions. If you would like to share ideas or volunteer to teach, please contact her at cheryl_iverson@ama-assn.org.

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CBE VIEWS

MARCH-APRIL 1997 ♦ VOLUME 20 ♦ NUMBER 2

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CBE Views (ISSN 0164-5609) is published bimonthly by the Council of Biology Editors, Inc., 60 Revere Drive, Suite 500, Northbrook IL 60062. It serves as a forum for the exchange of information and ideas among professionals concerned with publishing in the sciences. Articles, letters to the editor, news about CBE members, and other items of special interest to our readers are encouraged. For more details about submission, see "Information for *CBE Views* Contributors".

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