
You can be an editor too!

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Even before *Genes & Development*, Terri Grodzicker and I had developed a special relationship—we were both smokers. When I was promoted to the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory staff in 1984, I inherited the departing Steve Hughes' desk in the office he had shared with Terri. As such, during office gossiping sessions, our office would fill with a thick haze of smoke. Its seriousness was vividly brought to our attention one day when Yasha Gluzman—our jovial, burly colleague—opened our door to talk to us and could barely see us, or us him, through the dense smoke. It was but one of the embarrassments that led us, thankfully, to become lifelong exsmokers.

Our relationships with *G&D* developed separately before converging for over two decades. My relationship with the journal began in 1986 as I was drawn to the excitement of a new hometown journal doing battle with the Goliath journal *Cell*. I was a typical CSHL investigator—a young Turk—still searching to make his mark against established leaders. I thus identified with the journal. I also enjoyed talking to Steve Prentis, the journal's founding editor, about his new baby. I was honored that he selected me to review a paper for its first issue in 1987. Later that year, I published my first of what would be 16 *G&D* publications.

Like so many at CSHL, I was shocked when I learned that Steve had died in a skidding car accident the last Saturday of February 1987; I remember well that night's icy roads. The untimely death made many of us at CSHL want to ensure the success of the journal in Steve's memory. The person most impacted by Steve's disappearance, as far as the journal was concerned, was Mike Mathews who, being the sole CSHL member of the *G&D* Editorial Board, generously stepped in on short notice to keep the fledgling journal going.

I knew Mike well, as he was the leader of our large National Cancer Institute program project in which I had participated since my 1983 arrival in CSHL. This relationship worked to my benefit, as in the fall of 1987 Mike called me on my lab phone—yes, I still did hands-on research then—to invite me to be a member of the

G&D Editorial Board. It was my first editorial board invitation and I jumped at the opportunity. It also put me in a privileged position to follow how Terri ended up taking over the reins of *G&D* the following year.

While Mike Mathews did an outstanding job keeping the *G&D* ship afloat, by his own admission, being a journal editor was not his calling. I remember Judy Cuddihy, the mainstay of the *G&D* operation, telling of how Mike would agonize over decisions. Thus, he was not a long-term solution for running the journal, but in spring 1988, no solution to his replacement had announced itself.

My first awareness of Terri Grodzicker being a possibility for *G&D* Editor was in early summer 1988. Mike Botchan and Bob Tjian, both important CSHL alumni and friends of Terri, encouraged her to take on the position, arguing that she would be the perfect editor. They also convinced Jim Watson of the good match. I was less sanguine. I did not know Terri as a difficult decision-maker and feared that she would also suffer like Mike when the hard ones arose. I was concerned for how, when the likes of a Nobel laureate fought for a paper that belonged in *Molecular and Cellular Biology*, she would stand her ground. I quickly learned that at least in this case I was a poor judge of character. She could well stand her ground.

I fortunately had few papers formally rejected by *G&D*. As it happens, so as to avoid conflicts of interest, Terri put in place a policy whereby submissions by CSHL scientists were handled by the European office. I, however, being a *G&D* Editorial Board member, was exempted from the policy—unless she was not convinced by the value of my proposed submission, in which case, she advised me that if submitted, it would be sent to Europe. I knew better than to counter her opinion, and thus those manuscripts, with rare exception, went elsewhere.

As far as I was concerned, she always had good taste—my approved submissions invariably passed muster in review. Indeed, the first of my papers that she handled—it was during the fall of 1988, as she transitioned to full Editor of the journal—was in competition with other parallel end-of-year submissions to *Cell*. I have been forever

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thankful for her speed, as our paper came out in time with the others; to date, it has been my most highly cited paper.

Over the years, I was fortunate to see firsthand how she worked. We had an agreement. As a CSHL Editorial Board member, Terri would give me fewer papers to review—for which I was notoriously slow—and in return I would stand in for her in the *G&D* office when she was traveling. For most of the 1990s, papers were still being submitted by snail mail. Thus, to keep things moving, whenever she was away for an extended period of time, I would go down the hill from James Laboratory to the *G&D* office in the Carnegie Library and sit with Judy Cuddihy to decide which of that day's submissions were of sufficient interest to move forward for Editorial Board review or full review. Less interesting submissions were set aside for Terri's final decision upon her return. I actually did not have much input; Judy generally knew what Terri's opinion on a submission would be, and so I largely rubber-stamped her opinion. It was thus that I learned how Terri's mind worked. She had an excellent sense of what was good-quality science and also of what was hot, and she emphasized the intersection of the two.

At the turn of the century, I was greatly distracted by the opening of the Watson School of Biological Sciences as its founding dean, and, with the emergence of electronic submissions, Terri no longer needed on-site examination of submissions during her absences. However, my distancing from the *G&D* Editorial office was not for long. When, a few years later, Nouria Hernandez and I decided it was time to move on from CSHL for the comfort of Switzerland, Terri quickly saw an opportunity. Rudi Grosschedl had concurrently announced his intention to step down as European Editor, and Terri was in search of a replacement. I fit her bill.

Thus, in January 2005, while not yet fully settled in Lausanne, Switzerland, I began a 5-year stint as European Editor of *G&D*. The European Editorship offered me a welcome entrée into the European scientific community. I developed many relationships and enjoyed promoting European science. But it was not easy. The pace was unre-

lenting, the angst wearying. It gave me all the more respect for Terri's fortitude.

The coordination of the U.S. and European offices took work. Terri maintained a formal agreement that the CSHL Editor (i.e., her) would not override a decision taken by the European Editor. For me, her abstention was formally true, but Terri ran a tight ship and made clear what she thought of the papers submitted to the European office.

Among the most memorable upsides to being European Editor were Terri's yearly visits to check up on the European office, invariably in the summer. After a day or two of checking the files—and going over my manuscript rejection rates—Terri would make sure that we had a dinner date with Ueli Schibler, the University of Geneva *G&D* Editorial Board member. Ueli knew all the quaint restaurants among the vineyards overlooking Lake Geneva and selected a different one for each visit. It was a great introduction to the culinary attributes of my new home. And Ueli and Terri made for lively discussion.

Many will speak to Terri's professionalism as an editor—as they well should—but for me, my relationship with Terri involved mentorship blended with friendship. Our relationship, although heavily *G&D*-centric, was so much more. As my senior, she offered me her outstandingly critical mind to improve my science before publication, particularly at our building "group" meetings at James Laboratory in-house. She also taught me how to manage my time—an invaluable asset as I took on more administrative roles. She taught me to keep effective to-do lists: "Don't mix agenda items (the meetings will come and go on their own) with your list of obligations. And don't confuse urgency with importance."

As all effective teachers will be, on occasion she could be punishing, but what I learned was invaluable. She taught me how an accomplished editor manages the art of publication—the invaluable end product of our research enterprise.

And all along, she was always up for a scientific gossip.