



From “hot type” to Evise: A 50-year career in journal editing

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ABSTRACT

I began work as an editor on NIMH's quarterly publication *Schizophrenia Bulletin*. Later I became the Managing Editor of Elsevier's *Psychiatry Research*. Over 50 years, I saw changes in scientific review and journal production that were at first quite slow but later rapidly accelerating. I started in an era before PCs, where authors submitted typewritten (i.e., on typewriters) paper manuscripts and editors relied on pencils for typographic instructions and copy-editing changes. Manuscript review was entirely by mail, three copies of each manuscript being sent to reviewers worldwide, and reviews likewise being returned by mail. Efficiency was enhanced with the appearance of fax machines, overnight courier services and, best of all, email communication. The ubiquity of PCs led to the submission of manuscripts on diskette and later as email attachments. Manuscript submission, review, copy editing, and transmission to the publisher were all done by email. In a parallel development, the review process and journal visibility were revolutionized by the advent of the “electronic” library, aiding the selection of appropriate reviewers and leading to a worldwide explosion in manuscript submissions. Web-based manuscript-reviewing systems like Evise are state-of-the-art, but will doubtless be replaced by other advances to delight and confound the editor.

1. *Schizophrenia Bulletin*

When I began work on the National Institute of Mental Health's experimental publication *Schizophrenia Bulletin* in 1969, it was in the waning days of “hot type,” the laborious process in which molten lead type is formed. The NIMH's Printing Officers, all of whom had completed 7-year apprenticeships as typesetters and printers, may have been unduly attached to a technique that dated back to Gutenberg. In my role as a copy editor, the form of typesetting was of little consequence, as it moved from “hot” to “cold” type (photocomposition). Not until much later were there revolutionary changes in journal production that markedly affected my own work.

In 1969, manuscripts supplied by authors were typewritten, generally on an electric typewriter, maybe even an advanced IBM Executive. Possibly there were a few (very few) holdouts for manual typewriters – Luddites like myself who initially found electric typewriters frighteningly speedy. The copy editor prepared the author's manuscript for typesetting by hand-entering instructions for typographical format (e.g., 10/12/19 Times Roman) on each page, hand-marking text that should be in bold or italic font, and specifying the point size of display type (e.g., 12-point Helvetica). Corrections of usage errors and rewriting to enhance readability were done in pencil (not necessarily blue pencil, however) or pasted over the text in the form of typed inserts.

Because all manuscripts were completely retyped in the composition process, two-person proofreading was a laborious part of each editor's job. One member of the proofreading team read the original copy aloud to a second, who entered corrections on long galley proofs, using proofreaders' marks as specified in the U.S. Government Printing Office's Style Manual. The proofreading process usually required 2–3 days. The galley-proof stage was succeeded by page proofs, in which pages had been made up with figures and tables; only those portions of the text that had required correction needed to be proofread again. Not for 15–20 years could this exhausting (if sedentary) task be abandoned.

The *Schizophrenia Bulletin* was a new quarterly publication, the joint creation of Loren R. Moshier, M.D., Chief of the Center for Studies of Schizophrenia, and Managing Editor Bette Runck, a Writer-Editor in the National Clearinghouse for Mental Health Information. Because Bette was “on loan” from the Clearinghouse, I had been hired as her assistant. Loren saw the *Bulletin* as a way of widely publicizing schizophrenia-related research grants funded by NIMH, which formed his portfolio as Center Chief. Each issue of the *Bulletin* had a theme; the early issues focused on twin studies, phenomenology, EEG and evoked potentials, biology, childhood schizophrenia and autism, treatment, high-risk studies, and diagnosis. One issue a year featured the Special Report on Schizophrenia, which reviewed the year's developments in schizophrenia research, derived from grantees' progress reports and published articles. Because in addition to commissioned articles, the *Bulletin* also

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Fig. 1. *Schizophrenia Bulletin* Editorial Board Meeting, mid-1970s, Rockville, MD.



Fig. 2. *Psychiatry Research* Editorial Board Meeting, mid-1990s.

accepted manuscripts submitted by researchers in the field, we had occasional “potpourri” issues. A distinctive feature of the *Bulletin* was the artwork on its cover, all done by persons with a diagnosis of schizophrenia or another psychiatric condition. In an era when most research focused on tasks that persons with schizophrenia performed poorly, Loren saw the art on the *Bulletin*'s covers, not as expressions of pathology, but as something that patients could do well, often extremely well. If our covers never reached the level of Van Gogh, they left a mark on my memory that is still pleasing today.

Manuscripts were submitted through the mail, an original plus three copies to be sent to reviewers – also by mail. Almost all manuscripts were reviewed by members of the *Bulletin*'s editorial advisory board. Methods of identifying outside reviewers were primitive by today's standards, emerging from Loren's memory as a potential good match for the manuscript or identified from the submitted manuscript's reference list. Reviews, like the manuscripts, all came in the mail – at a time before fax machines and email. The review process was slow, so it was fortunate that the *Bulletin* was a quarterly publication.

To find potential reviewers' addresses and to check questionable references required a trip to the library. For most purposes, the small NIMH library was adequate. Checking the references in an encyclopedic review article on the biology of schizophrenia, in experimental issue number 4, required a week of rummaging through the stacks in the basement of the NIH Clinical Center Library. Fortunately (or unfortunately), that level of obsessiveness was a one-time event, and I kept reference-checking within reasonable bounds in later issues. We were a one-car family in those days, and I had to pick Monte up at the NIH Clinical Center anyway, so occasional library forays were convenient. Monte was invariably to be found in the PDP Lab (a prototype for later Digital Equipment computers), working with a colleague (Dolf Pfefferbaum) to program tasks for psychophysiological experiments. The conversation ranged from Fortran to Basic to Machine language – all beyond my comprehension (however archaic those programming languages are today). Crawling around in the NIH Library stacks was an easier assignment than trying to extricate my husband from his room-sized computer.



Fig. 3. Monte and Sherry Buchsbaum sailing off to retirement, together.

Initially, the *Bulletin* was experimental, published on a trial basis. Although each issue had a number, volume numbers were forbidden. The *Bulletin* was free, distributed to anyone who wrote to the Center or the Clearinghouse asking to be added to the mailing list. The *Bulletin's* promotion from an experimental to a bona fide journal required the preparation of a massive and arcane document to be submitted to the Bureau of the Budget, renamed during the several-year process, as the Office of Management and Budget. To our dismay, Caspar Weinberger, then the Director of OMB, returned the document with a scrawled disapproval, “I agree with everything they say – except that the Government should publish it.” I was 9 months pregnant at the time (and referred to by a female administrator in our Division as “the bomb”), but I wrote – with feverish intensity – a memo that evidently overcame Caspar's objections. So the *Bulletin* was now a real journal, indexed by the National Library of Medicine and accorded the privilege of volume and issue numbers. (The original 14 experimental issues were retroactively labeled volume 1 – and led to indexing confusion that may continue to this day, if any of the early articles are still cited.) The journal was no longer free, but the subscription rate charged by the U.S. Government Printing Office was modest, so we ended up with a subscribership of approximately 6000 persons.

Because the *Bulletin* primarily published “theme” issues, we relied to an unusual extent on our editorial advisory board, not merely to review

submitted manuscripts, but to serve as guest editors of entire issues. Our editorial board contained grandees of schizophrenia research (David Shakov, David Rosenthal, Seymour Kety, John Romano, Roy Grinker, and Leopold Bellak). Younger (at the time) members of the board served as guest editors: for example, Irving Gottesman (genetics), Norman Garnezy (high-risk studies), Herbert Meltzer (dopamine hypothesis), John Strauss and Will Carpenter (diagnosis), Marian DeMyer (childhood schizophrenia and autism) – not to mention, Monte Buchsbaum (EEG and evoked potentials). Hapless guest editors were ruthlessly recruited at the annual editorial board meetings.

2. *Psychiatry Research* and information science advances

Because Bette Runck was needed for numerous projects of the National Clearinghouse for Mental Health Information, her principal employer, I had been promoted to Managing Editor. I was quite busy, so I was not particularly enthused when Frederick Goodwin approached Monte, in 1979, about joining him as co-editor of a new Elsevier journal, *Psychiatry Research*, which would be published bimonthly. My role was the same as for the *Schizophrenia Bulletin* – except that I was moonlighting, working at night and in between my sons' soccer and basketball games on the weekends. By a merciful providence, so to speak, Monte decided to move from NIMH to the University of

California Irvine. I continued to work, as a Government contractor, on the *Bulletin*, but my time was primarily devoted to *Psychiatry Research*.

During this period, changes in journal publishing were taking place. Fax machines (initially with thermal paper) came first. I began receiving proofs by fax and returning corrections the same way, speeding up the process – and far less expensive than international Federal Express shipments to Elsevier's offices in Amsterdam and later Shannon, Ireland. Reviews were sometimes received by fax, but the manuscript-review process was still largely by mail. Later, optical scanners made it possible to edit manuscripts using a word processor. That advance was quickly followed by manuscripts submitted on 8-inch floppy disks and then 3.5-inch PC-formatted diskettes. Arrival of the disks eliminated both paper editing and manuscript review-by-mail. Email invitations were sent to potential reviewers, with the manuscripts provided as email attachments (oh, yes, the fax machine had now been replaced by email). Reviewers sent their reviews by email, fax and, occasionally, mail.

An accepted manuscript could be copy-edited on the PC. Elsevier had a system using BRIEF (now CRISP, an editing language also ideal for formatting program code) in which manuscripts were edited and typographic codes entered simultaneously. Initially, diskettes were transmitted by mail; only later were they sent electronically as email attachments. Although proofreading was still needed, the time-consuming two-person approach could be eliminated since the author's electronic copy was perfectly transmitted (Hallelujah).

Next to be eliminated was the “physical” library, although university librarians and technical staff were still much needed. I enjoyed my trips to the library and seeing all the latest issues of scientific publications on display, but I was happy to be able to search for reviewers and to check references at my desk, without having to ride an elevator to the library. Elsevier was early in the process of presenting journal articles on-line, and was one of the first publishers to make back issues of journals (going back decades) available on-line. With the appearance of PubMed, Scopus and other on-line library resources, there was an explosion of manuscript submissions from all over the world. During the “review-by-mail” period, a submission rate of 300 manuscripts/year was daunting for a “Mom and Pop” shop to process. With enhanced tools (PubMed, email submissions and review), it became possible to handle hundreds, eventually thousands of submissions. Through key word searches, potential reviewers could now be much more closely matched to the topic of the submitted manuscript. It was also possible to see if the author had appropriately cited related articles by other scientists or if the author had published other articles that

were only very slightly different from the submitted manuscript. The “electronic” library greatly enhanced the quality of the manuscript-review process.

The next stage – and in my 50-year career – the final stage was the introduction of web-based review systems like EES and, now, Evise. In some respects, web-based systems are more difficult than the previous email-based review process. Authors and reviewers sometimes have difficulty in logging onto the websites, and technical problems are often a challenge. For the editor, however, these systems offer an invaluable record-keeping service. Even when manuscripts were submitted and reviewed by email, reviews were variously submitted by email, fax and hard copies. Manuscripts under review were stored in folders in file cabinets (an extremely large number of file cabinets, nearly 100 drawers by 2008). Reviews, as received, were added to the folders, with an attendant risk of misfiling or failure to file at all. Computer databases could be used to keep track of the review process, but a simple notebook to log in manuscripts and enter dates of review receipt often seemed the easiest approach. With EES and Evise, the need for paper storage and record-keeping was eliminated entirely (Hallelujah, again). Manuscripts submitted via the web, manuscript reviews handled in like manner, and the electronic transmission of accepted manuscripts to Elsevier – all are impressive, labor-saving developments. To me, though, the record-keeping function is the most important contribution of all.

3. Retirement

Over 50 years, I have seen many changes in journal editing and production, so many that they are difficult to recall, especially the sequence of exactly when one innovation succeeded (or preceded) another, since a long overlap was always present, Elsevier has been an innovator, and I look forward to seeing what will come next – even if I do so from the sidelines. I am going to have a difficult time breaking the PubMed habit. The combination of the electronic library and website processing has immeasurably changed citation and reviewer scope, globalized research, and allowed me to keep pace with the nearly ten-fold bounty of manuscripts. [Figs 1–3](#).

Supplementary materials

Supplementary material associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at [doi:10.1016/j.psychres.2018.12.104](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2018.12.104).