People Profile: Adam Chesler

Editor

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had to dedicate a lot of time — in addition to handling their regular assignments — to get this done.

Previously, the notions of comprehensiveness of collections and archives were for the library to ponder. Now publishers have a share in this effort, so resources are dedicated not just to the digitization, but also to the administration (of access, quality-checking, bringing on new content if and when it is available, increasing the resolution of scanned images, embedding links, etc.) of articles published over a hundred years ago. This has not only brought the publisher closer to its legacy, but it has also changed the relationship of the publisher to its authors. There are connections forged between current editors and staff and long ago contributors, plus a better understanding of the history of our program, which helps us manage it. From the ACS’s perspective, by making these thousands of articles newly available to millions of readers, we have been able to continue to fulfill a key component of our mission: to broaden access to chemistry and chemist-related materials. Change, in this instance, has certainly been a good thing. There is now a greater appreciation for the stewardship role the publisher plays. While not all the questions about preservation have been answered, it is another topic of mutual concern and interest for publishers and librarians, which means one more concept is now a piece of common ground for collaboration and discussion.

The laudable achievement of making available hundreds of years of content on a global basis has created another challenge: as more readers view ACS content in countries where previously there was limited access, submissions to our journals have mushroomed (the ACS now receives more manuscripts from outside the US than from within). This means we have hired additional editorial staff to handle the growth of our publications, and it has driven us to open our first editorial offices in Asia and South America. We now have over 200 editorial offices worldwide (all of which require IT/communications support), managing the day-to-day scientific and publishing affairs of our thirty-three journals and Chemical and Engineering News.

These increased submissions have added pressure to our base of reviewers. It can be difficult enough to attempt to refere a modest flow of papers, but with a flood of manuscripts (we are receiving fifty percent more than we were at the start of the decade), there is a lot of reviewer fatigue to counter. ACS has introduced workshops at its two annual meetings to try and develop new reviewers, encouraging (younger) scientists to participate in the scholarly process and alleviate the burden that has built up on more established reviewers.

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Adam Chesler

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BORN & LIVED: Born in New York; lived in the Bronx; Teenack, New Jersey; and the Boston area from 1980 - 2005; now reside in Alexandria, VA.

EARLY LIFE: I recall that I wasn’t bald. I remember very little otherwise, because I get all weepy and bitter after that.

FAMILY: I have a younger sister and brother, both teachers; my sister has four children, the oldest turning 14 this year. Wife Marla works at the Library of Congress for Flركة/FedLink. Parents (along with my siblings) live in NJ; dad retired from teaching (principal-ing) in the Bronx after over 30 years of yeoman service, and now is a full-time grandfather, and mom works as an orthodontal assistant (probably still paying off the braces we all needed as kids).

EDUCATION: BA in English and American Literature from Brandeis University in Waltham, MA, with studies squeezed in during breaks from track practice and cooking at the campus grill. And, um, socializing in a very civilized manner with my very mature classmates.

FIRST JOB: In high school: stocking and selling casual clothing at a privately owned store in Teenack, NJ.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: Started at Kluwer Academic Publishers in 1985 as a Marketing Associate in the Medical/Life Sciences division (creating brochures and space ads, setting up displays and attending trade shows, etc.). After a few moves around the department and near-terminations for various acts of insubordination (including the use of sarcasm in formal memoranda), was appointed Marketing Manager for Electronic Products and Services in 1997, and Director of Library Relations in 2002. After a brief stint at Ingenta, joined the American Chemical Society as Assistant Director, Sales and Library Relations in 2004. Member of NASHIC, and elected to the group’s board in 2005 as Member at Large. Have been heckled widely and often at numerous publishing, scholarly, and library conferences in assorted countries, and written a few articles (avoiding the use of sarcasm) about various publishing issues.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Complete (or rather, try to complete) crossword puzzles; read; run (okay, jog); do what my wife tells me to do (see “Philosophy” below)

FAVORITE BOOKS: Hmm. Two that leap to mind: from years ago, All the King’s Men (Robert Penn Warren); recently, Lamb (Christopher Moore).

PET PEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: Rudeness, particularly people who interrupt; highway rubberneckers, who, upon slowing down to stare AT THAT INCREDIBLE SIGHT OF A MAN GETTING A SPEEDING TICKET!!! should be instantly deposited, perhaps by the invoking of certain laws of quantum mechanics, at the very back of the traffic tie-up he/she is causing. Not that I spend a lot of time thinking about it.

PHILOSOPHY: “Happy wife, happy life.”

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: I’m proud to have helped introduce Kluwer Online to the scholarly community in the late ’90s, and to overseeing the implementation of Pubnet at Kluwer, which allowed us to process book orders electronically and eliminate thousands of hours of keyboarding for our customer service staff, freeing them up to handle numerous other tasks.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: To make significant progress in reading the stack of books I’ve bought over the past couple of years; to work with ACS staff, customers and contributors to develop policies and practices that allow us to continue broadening access to our content, in a sustainable and viable manner.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Still grappling with the ramifications of electronic publishing, although I think a “killer app” type of solution to digital preservation will be found.