Dirk Steps Down as Views Afield Columnist

Tanya Nading

Lynn Dirk, who has overseen the Views Afield column for Science Editor since 1999, is stepping down from the department. Her last column appears in this issue.

“We appreciate the thought and skill Lynn has devoted to writing columns for Views Afield”, says Barbara Gastel, editor of Science Editor. “And we’re grateful to her for reviewing columns that others have written for this department.” The idea for the Views Afield column came from Dirk’s experience while working for the University of Florida’s Department of Anesthesiology as a biomedical editor from 1978 to 1996. One of her responsibilities was to act as the department’s librarian. During her time there, many journals crossed her desk, including Science and JAMA. While looking in the journals for guides for authors, she noticed that many had articles related to biomedical editing from time to time.

“Because these articles were so widely scattered among journals at irregular times, I thought it would be a good idea to highlight them similar to a book-review column”, Dirk says. The Views Afield column has consisted mainly of annotated lists of articles on science editing or related topics that have appeared in periodicals other than Science Editor.

Dirk says that a part-time job in abstracting anesthesiology articles for a secondary anesthesiology journal from 1982 to 1992 helped influence her work on Views Afield. Dirk both wrote Views Afield columns and oversaw guest columns by interns and others.

Dirk is stepping down as editor of this department to pursue a project that she has set on the back burner—a series of children’s books based on all the academic disciplines, each one to explain that aspect of the world.


Tanya Nading prepared this article while an intern for Science Editor.
Barbara [Gastel, editor of Science Editor] and then later with the interns has been a great pleasure. I hope that Views Afield will continue in some form or other and bring as much pleasure to a new contributor as it did to me.”

Dirk graduated from the University of Florida in Gainesville with a bachelor's degree in English education. She also has a master's in mass communication, specializing in science communication, specifically journal peer review. After obtaining her bachelor's degree, she found it difficult to find a job teaching English and instead worked in biomedical editing from 1978 to 1996. She then was editor for the institutional review board at the University of Florida from 1996 to 2002.

Dirk was then recruited to an administrative position at the Malcom Randall Veterans Affairs Medical Center's Brain Rehabilitation Research Center. While working there, she was inspired by the center's director and other investigators to return to school to study linguistics. She is now a graduate student in linguistics and is working part-time for the Brain Rehabilitation Research Center, where she helps with administrative projects, such as annual reports and creating databases.

Dirk says she loves to edit, but opportunities in Gainesville, where she lives, have been limited. She says that if an opportunity arises in Gainesville for her to edit she would take it “in a heartbeat”. For now, she says, she will continue to study linguistics and write children's books. Science Editor thanks Dirk for her time and dedication over the years.

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