

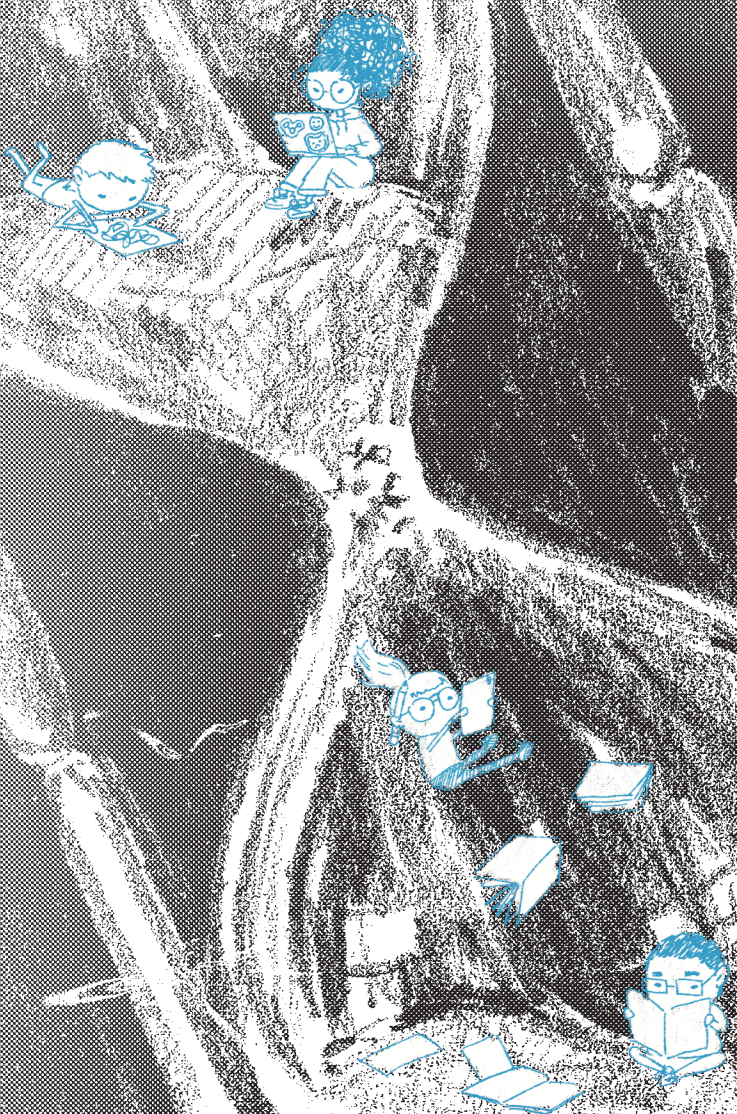
A quarter-century of BSR

25 YEARS OF SCRAPPY STUDENTS AND OUR SCIENCE STORIES

When I started art directing for the *Berkeley Science Review*, our 25th anniversary loomed just over the horizon. But the years that came before my time were shrouded in mystery. In moments sandwiched between stress and the humdrum of jam-packed workdays, I dove down the rabbit hole of our history. With overtones of nostalgia and gratitude, I listened to thirteen alumni of *BSR* talk about the magazine, how it's evolved over time, the people they worked with, and how being part of *BSR* shaped their lives. I exchanged emails with many more alumni, dug deep into our old issues, and fumbled through any folder of files I could find in our scattered digital archives.

Yes, *BSR* is 25 years old—with 50 issues in the books. In those years, *BSR* has passed through the hands of 29 editors in chief, 24 art directors, and 22 managing editors; as well as countless other writers, editors, and staff of various roles. These roles have typically been filled by busy graduate students with a love for science storytelling in its various forms. Their dedication keeps the spirit of this publication alive and makes the *Berkeley Science Review* what it is.

On the surface, *BSR* is a source of science news. It's certainly critical for science to be accessible and well-communicated. Behind the scenes, however, *BSR* is also a catalyst for cross-campus connections; a gateway into opportunities beyond academia; a long-standing community of passionate, curious, and hard-working students; and at the end of the day, a labor of love.



THE FIRST TWO ISSUES OF BSR WERE PRINTED IN BLACK AND WHITE WITH BLUE (CYAN) ACCENTS. THE PAPER HAD A NEWSPRINT-LIKE TEXTURE (IN BOTH A PHYSICAL SENSE AND IN THE HALFTONE TEXTURE IN THEIR IMAGES).

UNLIKE THE ELABORATELY ILLUSTRATED LOOK OF OUR RECENT ISSUES, THEY HAD A MUCH MORE MINIMALISTIC DESIGN.

Beginning from a blip

Our first issue started much like any recent one, with a call for contributions across campus. Like every issue, it entailed countless hours of writing, editing, and eyes strained staring at Adobe InDesign. Issue 1 was published in black and white with blue accents in spring 2001 by a cluster of scrappy PhD students. “*BSR* started with a blip on the internet...an email to the student community gauging interest in starting a new popular science journal about [UC] Berkeley,” wrote Eran Karmon, our co-founder and first editor in chief, in his letter from the editor. “We wanted a multidisciplinary look at Berkeley science, past and present, and that’s what the *BSR* is.” Some details of our founding have been lost to time, but the founding aspirations of *BSR* still echo loudly from past to present.

Funnily enough, the blip that started it all came from someone who did not end up working on *BSR*: Kim Miller, a student in chemical engineering who was also active in student government. Temina Madon (our founding managing editor) says, “Kim felt she was too busy to participate, but she encouraged us to push the idea forward.” Temina tells me she and Eran “sent out a message inviting all interested grad students to an initial meeting on campus one night.” She says, “The whole enterprise was a way for students to explore ideas they were intellectually intrigued by—science policy, science history, commercialization, journalism, entrepreneurship.”

I also spoke to Jessica Palmer Ryen and Colin McCormick, both of whom were heavily involved in our first five issues. Jessica was one of the students who went to that initial *BSR* meeting. She started as an editor before becoming content editor then managing editor, and she worked closely with Art Director Una Ren on magazine design and illustration. Colin wrote for our first two issues and



THE FIRST SIX ISSUES OF BSR, PROVIDED BY COLIN MCCORMICK. PHOTOGRAPHY: DASHIELL CARREL

edited for our second and third. He later stepped up as editor in chief after *BSR*’s founding leader, Eran Karmon, tragically passed away on March 5, 2003.

It is impossible to disentangle the success or the spirit of *BSR* from Eran’s discerning eye, focused vision, and synergistic leadership. Though he was only 27 years old when he passed, he was already a profoundly successful scientist and writer. His résumé included many prestigious awards like the Fulbright, Goldwater, and AAAS Mass Media Fellowship. In a statement on his passing by Eric Sorenson from the *Seattle Times*, where Eran completed his AAAS fellowship, Eran is described as “a study in brilliance, youthful restlessness, relentless accomplishment, and global interests.” Poring through statements made by Eran’s peers, colleagues, friends, and mentors, I piece together an image of Eran as someone with a quick-witted sense of humor and vocal opinions about both science and society who “played the banjo, ice-climbed, [and] loved country music,” wrote Amelia Heagerty for *The Daily Californian*.

Hearing about early editorial board meetings, it’s evident *BSR* would not be the organization it is today without Eran. “I feel really lucky to have been there on the ground,” says Jessica, reflecting on her experience as a member of the founding editorial team. “We wanted to give people a way to engage with science, but in a manner that we weren’t being supported to do as part of a traditional graduate program.” The founders also “felt strongly about interdisciplinarity and talking to people outside of your graduate program.” They wanted to “enable people to share

their research with a wider audience that wouldn’t otherwise hear about it.” Jessica tells me, “Eran was the force behind the conception of the magazine and its initial efforts,” and that “he had a vision of what he wanted the magazine to be.”

Jessica recalls that at some initial *BSR* meetings, “We argued a lot because we all had different conceptions of how to get this done, so I remember Eran sighing a lot and trying to keep us on track with the discussion because we would go off on tangents. I mean, you’ve got creative people from really different backgrounds coming together to create something new.” She tells me two incredibly valuable aspects of his leadership were that he “could be very creative and also very focused and goal oriented.” He could get the group to “come back to reality and get something practical accomplished.” Jessica says:

“Trying to get us all to focus, get something done, and do it well was an amazing achievement that he deserves full credit for. I think at one point, I had a hard copy of one of the articles that I wrote, and he had written comments and edits on it. But I just remember his handwriting. It was very linear, neat, condensed, which was so fitting with his personality. It was deliberate and focused, cramming a lot of information into a little tiny space. And I remember all of his comments all over it because he took it very seriously. I mean, everything. He wanted to make sure that every article, every interview, was the best it could be. He was really a perfectionist, and he made our work better. He was really gifted, and it was tragic that we lost him.”

Eran's passing could have easily meant the end of *BSR*, but he leaves behind a powerful legacy as we continue to publish issues semester after semester. Jessica recalls that some of the founders "questioned going on with the magazine, because it took the wind out of our sails." In her recollection, "We all thought of him as so closely connected to the magazine. But at the same time, it was something that was so important to him. We felt we had to continue because it was something that I firmly believe he would have wanted to keep going, and it would make him very, very happy to know that it is still going today."

Colin tells me that having to write the letter from the editor for the first issue of *BSR* without Eran was incredibly challenging. "We couldn't ignore it or pretend it hadn't happened," he says. Colin and the rest of the *BSR* team dedicated their spring 2003 issue to Eran's memory. In the letter, Colin writes, "We all mourn [Eran's] passing, and we will miss his energy and dedication. But we are proud to be carrying on his vision of an incisive, well-written journal about Berkeley science."

"It's special to know that something Eran created lives on in the world, and that there is a new generation of scientists and artists and others continuing to explore the world in this way," says Temina.

The Karmon family also started the

Eran Karmon Memorial Fund shortly after his passing to fundraise for "causes that are a tribute to his memory and celebrate his life," as stated in an announcement released by his family. One of these causes was *BSR* itself. In Issue 8, the *BSR* started issuing the Eran Karmon Editor's Award annually to the editor in chief to support hardworking, underpaid graduate students and to ensure that there would be someone willing to take on the tremendous role. The Karmon family members managing this fund passed away in recent years and the fund has since ended, but their support has truly left a lasting mark on the magazine.

Though *BSR*'s beginnings were entangled with grief, its founding was also a source of joy. It marked the establishment of a now 25-year-old organization where graduate students can find levity and a collective sense of wonder. "I think all of us felt like the alien in our department who wanted to learn about other departments," says Colin. "We wanted to do good science and graduate and get our dissertations done, but we also felt like there was a lot more we wanted to do." For the first few issues, he remembers "a general sense of excitement that we'd found this connection across scientific disciplines."

Jessica also looks back fondly on the community she found through *BSR*: "I think that what I enjoyed the most was knowing that we were creating opportuni-

ties for people to write and edit and do this stuff outside of their graduate studies—for people to talk to people in other programs that they never would have met." Jessica lists Eran, Colin, Temina, and other founding members like Heidi Ledford and Donna Sy, and tells me she "probably would have never met any of these people if it hadn't been for the *BSR*."

"We all got into it for the same reason, the curiosity and the excitement, that love of discovery," says Colin. "Maybe we were just having a whole lot of fun, and that was the motivator rather than something broader."

Struggles in starting a science magazine from scratch

Along with connection and joy, the founders also quickly learned how much work truly goes into creating a new publication: from financial woes and questions about content to composing artistic visions. "It was probably a bigger challenge than we had anticipated," Jessica tells me. "We got to see the magazine come together from nothing, but there were also a lot of practical considerations that we did *not* anticipate."

Some of these early struggles include navigating funding sources and working with publishers and printers. They also had to decide how much science-focused versus science-adjacent work to publish and what the magazine should look like. "There was a lot of reserving

TIMELINE IMAGES SOURCED FROM PAST BSR ISSUES

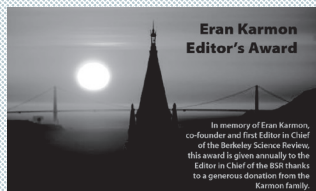
2000

2000
FIRST MEETING



SPRING 2001
FIRST ISSUE PUBLISHED

FALL 2002
FIRST ISSUE PRINTED
IN FULL COLOR



SPRING 2005
ERAN KARMON
EDITOR'S AWARD
FIRST AWARDED

we've been on the web since the start, but the blog was new!



the newly designed magazine also went down in size from 8.5 x 11" to 8 x 10.5"

2010

JULY 2010
BLOG LAUNCHED



FALL 2010
THE MAGAZINE GETS
A FRESH NEW LOOK

rooms, meeting in conference rooms on campus, sitting around, and hashing out, ‘How are we going to get this done? What kinds of features are we going to have in the magazine?’” In these meetings, Jessica remembers Eran asking questions like:

“What different types of things should we have besides just a traditional article about a topic? What other things should we put in the magazine and why? How can we make it fun and interesting and more like a real publication?” He was always full of ideas. That was one of the great things about working with him: he was just constantly proposing things. And then, of course, because we all had different takes on it, we would all argue about whether or not they were good ideas.”

Jessica also tells me other points of discussion included questions like whether it was really necessary to have a print magazine and how much of the effort should be spent on design versus text. She and Una, being very design-oriented, wanted to have more art integrated into the magazine, and to “have a design that would be artistic and elevated above a newsletter.” Jessica says, “We wanted to have something that was recognizable, a signature appearance of the *BSR*.” Doing so involved figuring out how to print the magazine in full color rather than black and white and how to work with artists or photographers to find or create new scientific illustrations.

The thought and care placed on the

look of the magazine precedes its impact on *BSR*’s reputation and members. “I remember just being blown away by the artistry that went into this. Jess and Una had done these incredible sketches and drawings,” Colin says. “I think I had never, as a physicist, realized that was part of the science craft. This was an incredible opportunity to learn about and see that, having had no familiarity with it before.”

In our early days and through our history, the work that goes into the magazine hasn’t always reflected what people originally set out to do. But the magazine has persisted from peoples’ willingness to step up and do what it takes to get each issue published and printed. “Honestly, we all kind of did anything that needed to be done,” says Jessica. “So I’m not sure that the job titles really add much.” Piecing together the list of *BSR* executive team members through the years, I noticed that for one semester—spring 2005—the editor in chief, Kaspar Mossman, also art directed the same issue.

Kaspar is still based in Berkeley, so I met with him at Caffè Strada. When *BSR* launched, Kaspar thought, “Man, that looks like something I’d really like to do.” But it took a few issues before Kaspar debuted his first article in spring 2004 on a device for low-field MRI called SQUID. Kaspar later wanted to join the editorial board himself, but those slots had filled up. Instead, the magazine needed a new

art director.

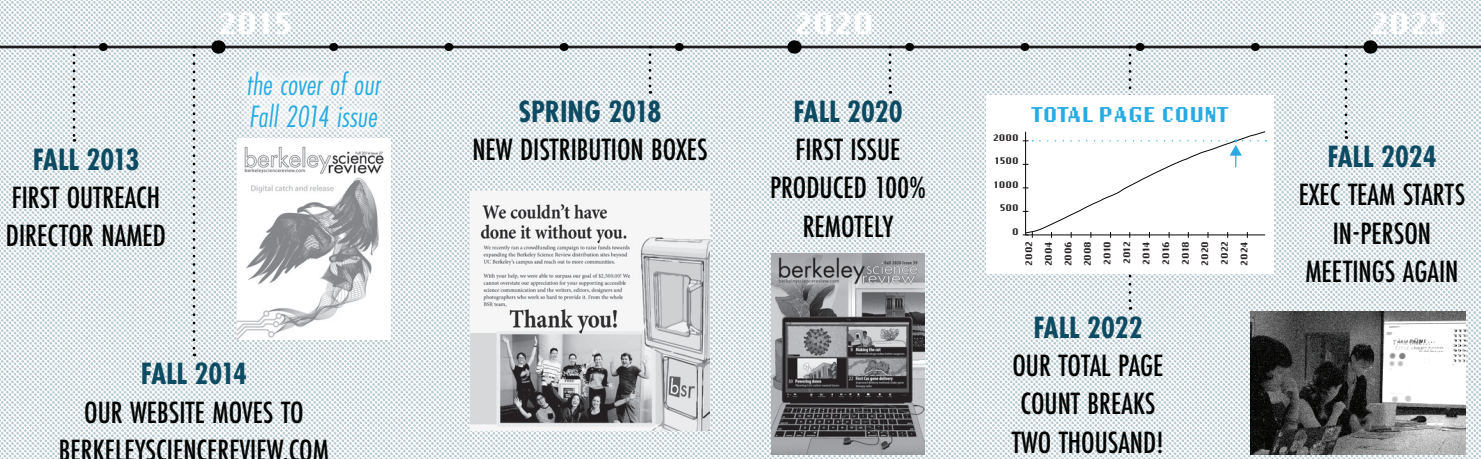
With no prior experience, Kaspar took up the mantle. He learned Adobe InDesign from the preceding art director, Tony Le, and recalls, “All of a sudden, I had the whole damn magazine to lay out.” The next semester, Josephine Lee (fall 2004 editor in chief), ended up stepping down, leaving Kaspar with the monumental task of leading the editorial board and laying out all 50 pages of Issue 8. Kaspar says, “The roles, you fall into them, and are you willing to learn how to do it? And if you’re good at it, then just go crazy, right?” He tells me it was “a lesson in constraints” with considerations like word limits, layout, and printing stipulations; and speaks fondly and highly of the *BSR* staff he worked with at the time.

“We probably bit off more than we could chew,” Jessica says. “But that’s good because we probably wouldn’t have done it if we’d realized how much work it would be. So, I think that in the end, it was all for the best. It was daunting. It was a lot of time, but it was a labor of love. Everyone worked very hard.”

Racing through our 1st decade

Issue by issue, *BSR* continued to pass through the hands of different members and made it through its first decade. Rachel Bernstein—our editor in chief in 2009—was first introduced to *BSR* while applying for graduate school in 2004. Having completed her bachelor’s

DESIGN: ELEANOR WANG



with a double major in biochemistry and English, she knew she wanted to continue to pursue writing and communication in parallel with her research.

BSR would have only been three years old in 2004, but Rachel tells me, “From our perspective today, it was young. But even at the time, it was very well established. It was a presence on campus.” She says, “Enough of a path had been blazed, and *BSR* had standards and a way of doing things.” She recalls being really impressed that *BSR* existed, and the magazine made UC Berkeley a top choice for her in choosing a graduate program. Rachel started writing for *BSR* in spring 2006 as a first-year rotation student. This semester marked our 10th issue. *BSR* celebrated this milestone with a spread covering nine follow-up snippets on stories from each prior issue. These nine issues alone had already accumulated a total of “428 pages, 183,971 words, 53 staffers, [and] 96 authors” (Iss10, p6).

Rachel became an editor in spring 2008. She tells me it was a “tremendous learning experience, working with authors, making sure that the copy is as strong as it can be.” At this point, “Many of the staffers had been with the *BSR* for quite a while. They were very seasoned,” says Rachel. “I was totally intimidated and impressed by these students who were a few years ahead of me who had been doing this for so long.” She lists a few names for me: Meredith Carpenter,

Kaspar Mossman, Jacqueline Chretien, Wendy Hansen, Matthew Mattozzi. Soon after joining the editorial team, many of these students graduated and passed the baton, and Rachel served as both our managing editor and editor in chief over four semesters and continued to support various operations even after stepping down.

Rachel says she “felt total imposter syndrome at the time.” She recalls thinking, “How am I in charge of this? How am I the one that people are looking up to and expecting answers from?” Michelangelo D’Agostino (fall 2006 editor in chief) expressed a similar sentiment in his letter from the editor: “When the wise elders of the Berkeley Science Review gathered under the cover of night in their hooded black robes to anoint me the next [editor in chief], my first instinct was to turn tail and run.”

Before Rachel’s time on the executive team, Meredith Carpenter was our editor in chief in fall 2007 and spring 2008. Meredith joined *BSR* as an editor for Issue 10 and wrote many articles during her tenure. Meredith tells me, “It was really nice to have other activities outside of your PhD, because even when things are not working in lab, you can feel that sense of satisfaction that comes with completing something.”

Like *BSR*’s founders, Meredith appreciated “meeting people—other graduate students, faculty, Nobel laure-

ates—I never would have interacted with if it hadn’t been for *BSR*.” *BSR* presents a way to make your time at UC Berkeley “much richer, because you can have those experiences outside of just being in your lab and interacting with the people in your department,” she says.

Rachel shares Meredith’s appreciation for the community *BSR* brought her, telling me that actually, “The folks who I more remember are the ones on the other side of my leadership transition, the folks who I was able to mentor and pass things on to.” She names Hania Köver and Greg Alushin, the two editors in chief immediately after Bernstein, as well as staff like Josh Shiode and Chris Holdgraf. “The names and the folks definitely stick with me even when we’re not in touch,” she says. Echoing what I heard from Jessica, Rachel tells me:

“It is such a labor of love. None of us or you have to do this, and it takes a lot of commitment and self-motivation to keep things moving and to keep the standard high. But everyone on the staff always had that, and it was such a pleasure to be working with folks who we could share that with.”

Rachel also tells me, “Realizing that you’re at the stage where you can do things and you can be in charge and that you’re not just in a position of taking in wisdom or products from other people—that’s what *BSR* was for me.”

BSR indeed offers a unique opportunity for creative leadership and problem-solving that many students have not had before. Jesse Dill, our web editor from 2007 to 2010, tells me, “It was a scrappy bunch of folks, doing our best to pick up the digital tools we needed to make the magazine happen.” His first project with *BSR* was hand-coding an update to the website for uploading articles online using PERL scripts. Around this time, Marek Jakubowski, our art director from fall 2009 through spring 2011, also gave the magazine a massive makeover as the sun set on the first decade of the 21st century.

Marek tells me that he was first roped into designing a Labscope layout by Tim De Chant, the art director before



THANK YOU TO COLIN MCCORMICK, MEREDITH CARPENTER, AND RACHEL HOOD FOR VERY KINDLY MAILING US COPIES OF OLD BSR ISSUES! PHOTOGRAPHY: DASHIELL CARREL

him. Having ample prior experience with Photoshop from a background in landscape photography, Marek quickly picked up InDesign and developed an obsession for design process and theory. “I was studying typography and color science, data visualization and publishing systems,” says Marek. “The more I got into it, the more I questioned why things are the way they are.”

The devil is in the details when it comes to design: whether it’s placing logos, choosing fonts for page numbers, or structuring photo and illustration credits. “The conclusion for a lot of my questions was a lot of things existed just because they existed.” After one semester as art director, he made the leap and redesigned everything. “That was a crazy time. I had 40 different versions of the logo” for every context where it might be used. “I realized what makes design look professional is consistency and having a reason for specific things. There’s always going to be exceptions, but I wanted to standardize it,” says Marek. *BSR* debuted its new look in fall 2010 for Issue 19.

20 issues in, 20 issues onward

As *BSR* hit its 10th anniversary and 20th issue, its reach kept expanding beyond the confines of the magazine itself. Through the 2010s, *BSR*’s scope expanded so drastically that it may be easier to ask, “What didn’t *BSR* do?” We hosted creative outreach events and writing workshops, had a short-lived tablet app and a print-on-demand T-shirt store, and launched a brand-new web presence through our blog.

The idea of starting a tablet-compatible version of *BSR* was introduced in summer 2013 at a *BSR* retreat under the discussion prompt, “How do you see the *BSR* in five years?” This prompt also seemed to spark ideas like creating new leadership positions for development, public relations, and outreach. At this retreat, the executive team also drafted up *BSR* organizational charts and job descriptions to see how the organization could be restructured to fit these new positions in. In fall 2013, Georgeann Sack

If you’ve seen our big chunky yellow BSR distribution boxes around campus or elsewhere in the East Bay, they were quite an effort to acquire! We once had none, once had only one or two, and now a good many exist thanks to Katie Deets. She and Nicole Repina (fall 2018 and spring 2019 art director) had to fill the boxes with pavers gravel from Home Depot to keep them from tumbling away. Not every building has a good spot to plop down a stack of science magazines. This thought may never occur to you until you look for that spot. But when each issue of BSR is printed, our writers, designers, and editors carry heavy stacks up and down the hill and try to get them wherever we can.

became *BSR*’s very first outreach director.

In October 2013, Georgeann (who also wrote, designed, and edited for *BSR*) spearheaded the organization of an event focused on the science of touch sensation for the annual Bay Area Science Festival (BASF). It was co-organized with BAAS-ICS (Bay Area Art and Science Interdisciplinary Collaborative Sessions), a San Francisco based nonprofit organization, and KALX-FM Spectrum, a science podcast that aired from 2011 to 2014. It consisted of 90 minutes of presentations by experts on touch sensation followed by a two-hour reception with interactive exhibits. Attendees could view mutant worms insensitive to touch and hang out with touch-sensitive robots. There was even a live experiment involving communicating emotion through touch.

From 2013 through 2019, *BSR* partook in a vast range of outreach events from the BASF and Cal Day to Discovery Days at Oracle Park (formerly AT&T Park) in San Francisco. *BSR* even helped organize a neuroscience room at the California Academy of Sciences’ Halloween-themed nightlife event in 2014.

Within the same year, Chris Holdgraf, a longtime editor and webmaster for *BSR*, redesigned *BSR*’s website. In her letter from the editor for Issue 27, Alexis Fedorchak, wrote that “in the week after we released Issue 26, more than 20,000 people visited our website” resulting in a site crash that Chris had

to remedy. He also helped migrate the site from “sciencereview.berkeley.edu” to “berkeleysciencereview.com” where our website is now housed. This change was in part an effort to make *BSR* feel like it was for the broader Berkeley community rather than just the university. “I think we wanted to have a place that felt like it was our own,” Chris tells me. *BSR* was “experimenting with different ways to connect around scientific communication beyond print media.”

An old Google Sheet from spring 2019 seems to show that within the span of two months, *BSR* tabled at multiple recruitment events like GradFest and Cal Day, held socials, hosted a writing workshop, and fundraised through Big Give. Amidst all the outreach, the publication never slowed. By the time we hit Issue 30 in spring 2016, *BSR*’s total word count broke *half a million*, as calculated by various former *BSR* editors in chief. I shudder to imagine how many words we have written since...

Sadly, these lively outreach events came to a screeching halt in 2020 as the pandemic struck. Our fall 2020 issue became “the first *BSR* issue produced completely remotely” according to Hayley McCausland (2020 editor in chief) in her letter from the editor.

Pandemics are certainly a prime example of massive global problems where accurate, clear, and well-disseminated science communication saves lives, but

Our alumni have branched off into a diverse range of careers outside of academia! Colin and Jessica were both AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellows, and many other alumni were AAAS Mass Media fellows. Jessica went on to get her JD from Harvard Law School and now works in patent law. Wendy Hansen, Spring 2007 Editor-in-Chief, got an MD after working as a science writer and in communications for a science museum for a few years. Rachel Bernstein is now Deputy News Editor for Science. I could write several thousand more words about all the ways other alumni are using their writing, design, editing, and other skills they've collected from their time with BSR. And maybe I will in our blog...

this is true for many facets of the world. Science itself, from questions asked to funding sources, is also deeply entangled in the workings of society. As the founders hoped, *BSR* has indeed attracted students with an appreciation for the interdisciplinary nature of the world.

50 issues and beyond

But amid the innumerable contemporary problems plaguing the world, where does *BSR* sit? What are our hopes for the future?

I never personally experienced *BSR* pre-pandemic or in the thick of it, but I did get to work with Héctor Torres Vera, who started writing for *BSR* in 2020. Héctor was also our managing editor for four semesters from 2023 to 2025 and the reason why the executive team now meets in person again once a month. For the first few years of the 2020s, our writing and design timelines were a little bumpy as communication was more difficult to navigate while we dealt with the chaos of those years.

As the world grappled with the grief of the pandemic, *BSR* also parted ways with its advertising agency. This was a daunting change. It meant losing a consistent source of financial support. As *BSR* has always been fully free for readers, our finances have always been precarious.

But the change was also a unilateral decision from the executive team. Héctor tells me:

"I think a big part of being managing editor is not just making decisions but coalescing decisions, organizing, asking questions, and making sure that the values of the team are aligned with what is happening behind the scenes with the magazine. That's a big part of why the magazine has lasted this long and will continue to last. The team behind it all, the executive team, really is a team, and they won't let themselves flounder."

We have "the benefits and drawbacks of being a relatively unstructured, informal organization," as Chris says. "We don't have a board with a strict vision. We have an inbuilt cycling of leadership." The benefit is a "willingness to change and figure out what can work better and not just repeating things for the sake of tradition," says Héctor. But the drawback is that it can be hard for things to last.

Our practices and systems only exist because people make the choice to bring them to bear. In my own time as art director, it's been a challenge figuring out how I can keep our design style guides consistent for anyone who might open up our InDesign templates in five years. I have so little control over the decisions people make as the years go by.

Over the years we have navigated many challenging decisions, times, and topics.

Even in the one-page letters from editors in chief introducing each issue, I found tales of struggles in scientific

funding and political landscapes and stories of strife in sustaining the livelihoods of international workers. In our spring 2004 issue, "You can read about Berkeley scientists who are stepping beyond academia to address global health problems in the developing world and how tightened security has affected international students—and in turn, scientific research—at the university," writes Carol Hunter. Greg Alushin writes that "the interplay between personalities, politics, economics, and research [took] center stage in" our 20th issue.

In 2026, we continue to face harsh cuts to scientific funding. International workers still face perils and precarity. Global health crises, climate disasters, and seemingly endless tragedies continue to permeate the fabric of society. Finding that history continually repeats itself, even through the lens of this graduate student-run science magazine, is striking, to say the least. Yet, as we hold fast to community and try to protect what we can, we have found ways to persist through the years. I'd like to maintain hope that this will remain true for years to come, as varying kinds of "issues" will inevitably arise.

Perhaps the times will always be unprecedented. Thus, making sense of the world and telling stories about it is an evergreen necessity.

I am a staunch believer that some of the most powerful and compelling science stories are the ones that do not shy away from recognizing the role science plays in society. We who do science, who tell stories about science, all partake in the workings of society. Science is inherently personal because it is done by people. Questions like who does science, who talks about science, who is telling you what kind of science matters or not, and what it all means for the people it impacts, are inherent to the narrative.

Science has been used to solve problems, but it has often introduced new ones. Throughout history, it has repeatedly been wielded as a tool to perpetuate devastating harm against minoritized communities. Consider the way Black people's bodily

autonomy and agency have been ignored in the case of Henrietta Lacks and the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, the creation of weapons of mass destruction, how narratives about COVID-19 led to violence against Asian Americans, the way AI data centers are wrecking cities, or the fact that universities including UC Berkeley continue to profit off of stolen Indigenous lands and artifacts.

Among the most imperative scientific questions are those asking how science can heal rather than harm society. I talked to Elizabeth (Libby) Lineberry, who most recently completed her tenure as editor in chief, at length about this. “Getting people involved in science and having communities talk about what they want—what they care about—is really important for making science work for people,” she says. Socioeconomic gaps and the high costs of college tuition make science inaccessible to people who experience the most societal injustice, but “you want to make sure that everyone’s getting their needs met.”

“When you’re in academia, you’re really stuck in your niche. You might be doing research that’s going to change the world, but a lot of it never gets past the lab. Fostering connections with the community is another way that you can contribute,” says Libby.

The horrors of the world are not a laughing matter, but community care and levity can compel us to do right and lighten the load of it all.

In my interview with Colin, he gave me silly anecdotes from our early issues about a physics student who traveled to Antarctica for cosmic microwave background research and about the genderqueerness of the pygmy blue-ringed octopus. “Science should be funny, at least sometimes,” he says. Integrating silliness was also “maybe a reaction to the tragic circumstances with Eran. So maybe we could still grin a little bit and make it fun, even in the wake of that.” Colin says humor also reminds us that “we got into science because it’s cool, interesting, fun, and enjoyable.” A valuable reminder considering how “grad school sometimes

preserves that and sometimes can make you lose sight of that.”

Libby also tells me she hopes *BSR* has “given people some fun and levity because it’s a place where we talk about fun science, and it’s also a place where we talk about harder topics that are important.” We talked about how finding joy in the little things can help us hold many of the more challenging truths about the world. “Sometimes you need to think about how many little things had to work together to make you happen and think, ‘Wow, that’s amazing.’ Or look at how big the universe is and think, ‘I’m a speck of dust.’”

My look back on the history of *BSR* has given me an appreciation for all the forces that came together to create and sustain it. It has truly been molded by the dedication of every person who has played a part in its production.

The process of doing science and being a grad student can be very lonely. Working with *BSR*, “You’re all unquestionably on the same team. You’re all working towards a similar passion and concrete objective,” says Chris. Like many of the alumni I interviewed, Katie Deets (former editor in chief and managing editor) shares this sentiment. She hopes that “as long as people are willing to sign up to do a PhD at Berkeley, that enough people are still willing to put in the effort to make *BSR* exist, too.”

“It’s a labor of passion, of love, and of

shared values. The values of the magazine and the values of its staff and authors are important,” says Héctor. “It’s been really gratifying to see how *BSR* really embraces that idea and reaffirms the concept of a magazine as not just pieces of paper stapled together, but its people. The people behind the magazine, their ideas, and their values.”

I conclude this article with my wholehearted gratitude for all of *BSR*’s people: past, present, and future. If you are reading this from the future, when—not if—*BSR* is working on its 100th issue, or maybe even beyond that, I hope you reach out. I would be honored to answer that call and tell you tales from my time here: merely a blip in the grand scheme of it all.

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