

# The BELS Letter

Board of Editors in the Life Sciences

Maintaining and promoting editorial proficiency in the life sciences

## From the President

With daylight saving time now in effect, the days are starting to grow longer. In my neck of Florida, where admittedly we don't face months of snow and bitter cold, it can nonetheless get quite chilly. As spring approaches and a recent warming trend here in the Sunshine State, our neighbors rushed out to plant new flowers. My hope is that BELS continues to plant progress—programs, resources, and opportunities that will help your careers as editors in the life sciences flourish for years to come.

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### *The BELS Letter*

Bryan Tutt, ELS(D)  
Managing Editor

Alex Rudie  
Publications Coordinator



# From the President

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BELS is in the process of evaluating our list of online resources. We want to ensure that the information we share is as relevant to the work you do as possible, so we're undertaking a refresh. We have a small group of volunteers who have committed to helping us scrutinize the resources and make recommendations so we can improve the reference sources and other items that appear on that page, things that will be most helpful to you.

Read on for a new feature, our first in-depth member profile. This is a great way to get to know our members better and to offer a way to foster new connections with each other. Also, make sure to check out the brief highlighting details of our next members-only event, "Expanding Your Editing Toolbox: An Overview of Some Popular Tools" presented by Hilary Cadman, ELS. Join in and pick up a few tips that can have an immediate impact on the work you do.

Wishing you all a wonderful month. As always, thanks for being a valued member of BELS.

*Melanie Fridl Ross, MSJ, ELS  
BELS President*

## BELS Member Discounts

*Want to save some green?  
You're in luck!*

BELS has partnered with resource providers to provide valuable members-only discounts on products and services that help make your job easier. These offers are exclusive to BELS members and should not be shared with any other non-member.



BELS member discounts include a **30% discount** on a single license of PerfectIt software. PerfectIt improves consistency, ensures quality, and saves time. BELS members also receive a **20% discount** on reference books such as *Scientific Style and Format: The CSE Manual for Authors, Editors, and Publishers* and *The Chicago Manual of Style*. The discount can be applied to both online and print versions of these books. For details about how to claim these discounts, please visit [bels.org](https://bels.org) and click on Member Resources.

# BELS Member Profile

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Kimberly A. Mankiewicz, PhD, ELS  
Scientific Editor, The University of Texas  
Health Science Center at Houston  
BELS Member since 2016



## What led you to choose this profession?

I always had a love of science and learning, and I knew I wanted to be involved in scientific research. After my undergraduate education at Marquette University, I went on to earn my PhD in Biochemistry/Biophysics at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center UTHealth Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences in Houston, TX. While I was in the lab, what I discovered was that while I loved scientific discovery and research, I didn't necessarily love designing and performing experiments. However, I discovered my passion for communicating science. With the support of my mentor, I began to work on learning how to communicate my own scientific work and other projects that my labmates were working on.

After graduation, I got my first job with the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Science at The University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston (UTHealth Houston), where I honed my skills as a technical science communicator in the clinical and basic science realms. Now I'm a scientific editor with the Center for Translational Injury Research at UTHealth Houston, where I work with our trauma research faculty, trainees, and staff.

## How did you first hear about BELS?

I first heard about BELS from a colleague of mine who gave a presentation on her path from PhD to medical writer/editor. She had talked about wanting to get more "writing and editing cred" as a PhD and how she had obtained her BELS certification. I wanted to show that I was a professional, so I sat for the exam. And passed!

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# BELS Member Profile

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## **How has BELS certification or membership benefitted you personally and/or professionally?**

Professionally, I think my certification gives me that extra little inch to show people that I am a professional in what I do beyond my PhD; personally, it has given me more confidence in my writing and editing skills. Membership in BELS has provided me with a great network of other editors I can get tips from or bounce ideas off of, which is especially important as I'm the only editor in my group. I also love volunteering with the Membership and Marketing Committee and contributing to the editing community.

## **What gives you job satisfaction?**

While I can't always add to the science of what I edit, I am able to contribute to the presentation of it. I'm satisfied when we get a manuscript or grant review back, and one of the comments is that the work was presented and written well. Then I know I've done my job.

## **What is your grammar pet peeve?**

Oxford/serial commas. While I know it's a preference, I think when you have a complicated topic and long sentences (as you do in academic technical writing oftentimes), serial commas add clarity and give the eye a break. I always add them where I can.

## **Which style guide or reference book do you use most in your work?**

As I'm in a university environment with a large clinical authorship, I use the AMA manual all the time. It's also a great go-to resource when I'm trying to explain reasons I've edited content a certain way (race and ethnicity for example). I keep it right next to my desk or open on my computer almost all the time when I'm working.

# Expanding Your Editing Toolbox

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Editing tools can help you improve your editing quality and efficiency. Please join us via Zoom on March 23 for the BELS Virtual Members-Only Event: Expanding Your Editing Toolbox.

Hilary Cadman, ELS, will provide an overview of some of the tools that she uses in her work (PhaseExpress, ETK+, EndNote, and ProWritingAid). Free and open to all BELS members! For details, please visit [bels.org](https://bels.org).



**BELS**  
Board of Editors in the Life Sciences

## Expanding Your Editing Toolbox

An overview of some popular tools

Presented by Hilary Cadman, ELS

Wednesday,  
March 23, 2022  
4-5 pm CST

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The Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS) was founded in 1991 to evaluate the proficiency of manuscript editors in the life sciences and to award credentials similar to those obtainable in other professions.

Potential employers and clients of manuscript editors usually have no objective way to assess the proficiency of editors. For their part, editors are frustrated by the difficulty of demonstrating their ability. That is why both employers and editors so often resort to personal references or ad hoc tests, not always with satisfactory results. The need for an objective test of editorial skill has long been recognized.

To meet that need, BELS developed a process for testing and evaluating proficiency in editing in the life sciences. The Board administers two examinations—one for certification and one for diplomate status. The examinations, written by senior life-science editors assisted by testing experts, focus on the principles and practices of scientific editing in English.