Turning Point

Shortly after I joined HHMI in 2004, I was given a writing assignment that would change my life. Newly hired as assistant editor of the HHMI Bulletin, I was sent to cover an early-morning breakfast meeting in Loudoun County. As the sun rose that day, local teachers, school administrators, and business leaders gathered with HHMI executives and staff members in an office building overlooking the busy construction site that was then Janelia Research Campus. Amid the clatter of knives and forks, HHMI formally announced a commitment to invest $1 million per year in support of science education in the Loudoun County Public School system. As if that wasn’t heady enough for this newbie, the event was also where I met my future husband.

To say that day was memorable is now an understatement. But its serendipitous effects weren’t yet evident as I went on to write that story, and many more, for the Bulletin. Then, two years later, against my wildest dreams, I was named editor. And what a ride it’s been. The magazine has become, as my boss puts it, “a storytelling machine” – an orchestrated effort by a cast of talented writers, editors, illustrators, photographers, and designers to capture the rich texture of the stories behind the remarkable people and work supported by HHMI. Our ability to tell those stories has grown ever more dynamic over time with the addition of video, animation, and multimedia to our online and iPad editions.

So for me, it’s somewhat bittersweet to acknowledge that this issue of the Bulletin will be the last ever published. But as we move away from the magazine format, we promise that the storytelling won’t abate: we plan to dive headlong into the swirl that is today’s communications frontier. You can look for continuing stories from HHMI, both online and through social and other digital media. And your favorite Bulletin articles from the past will still be available as well, archived indefinitely on our website. Some of them may even resurface from time to time, as the stories of scientific discovery are often by their very nature incremental and evergreen.

We hope you’ll stay with us as we make this pivot into a more nimble future. With Janelia now approaching its 10th anniversary, and newly funded scientists – such as the latest HHMI investigators introduced in this issue – coming on board on a regular basis, there is a deep vein of stories yet to mine. We will do our best to share the treasure with you.