Karen Piper
By Karen Piper
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I began working for the Section in 1987 when Janice Fineman had resigned as administrative secretary and David Howell had taken over those duties while the Section looked for a replacement. The company for which I was office manager had been sold two years earlier, and I was in the process of starting a bookkeeping/payroll services business.
The Section hired me as the administrative secretary, and I recall going to Northeastern to pick up the Section’s files from Dave. Dave was a pillar of the Section’s Board, having been Editor of The Nucleus, Section Treasurer, and Secretary. He was, however, not notable for being organized, and I recall retrieving files from an office in which one’s physical welfare seemed threatened by the piles of paper inside. Fortunately, Janice had been an extremely organized secretary, and the files were in good order.

I had the good fortune to be the administrative secretary during the chairmanships of Lloyd Taylor, Tom Gilbert, Mike Strem, Joe Billo, Chuck Kolb, and Katie Stygall. At that time, the annual reports to National were all on paper, and during January, my living room was covered with piles of paper for the seven copies that needed to be made. It was gratifying to receive the ACS Large Section Award in 1990 for the chairmanship of Mike Strem.

Recalling my work as administrative secretary brings to mind many stories, but the best memories are of the people I was privileged to work with. Phyllis Brauner was my mentor. She had large ideas and usually was able to get them to happen. Ed Atkinson, Dick Handrick, Arno Heyn, Dave Howell, Ted Light, and a host of others, now departed, were people who cared deeply about the Section and were easy to work with.

Janice Fineman had worked closely with Richard Handrick, and she kept records for the Trustees for which Dick acted as Treasurer. I took over these records, and then, when Bill Adams at Salem State decided to give up the position of Business/Advertising manager of The Nucleus, those positions passed to Russ McCann and Vince Gale.

I inherited the Business Manager’s position from Russ McCann in 1991. Later, I took over the circulation manager’s responsibilities from Dick Handrick. Dick kept The Nucleus mailing list on 3X5 cards and transferred them to IBM punch cards which were processed by Wang Laboratories. I was able to put the list into a dBase III file and print the cheshire labels in my office.

I was also administrative secretary during the first years of the Esselen Award, as a result of which I developed a close relationship with members of the Esselen family. I had the privilege of working with Arno Heyn when he became editor of The Nucleus in 1989.

When Arno assumed the chairmanship of the Esselen Award Committee in 2003, I had the opportunity to renew that relationship. His graciousness coupled with his attention to detail made that year very rewarding. Receiving the Arno Heyn book prize in 2012 in recognition of our relationship was an unexpected pleasure.
In 1992 I left the position of administrative secretary and it eventually passed into the very capable hands of Marilou Cashman and, now, to Anna Singer. I have retained my connections with the Trustees, The Nucleus, and the Esselen Committee. The Business Manager also serves as the circulation manager for The Nucleus, works closely with the Advertising Manager, Vince Gale, and is responsible for accounting. After 25-plus years of association with the Section, it is satisfying and rewarding to see the continuation of dedicated people carrying on the traditions of the Northeastern Section.