I had been in the US just about long enough to discern the various American accents when I noticed that Gabe enunciated his words clearly and always responded with a “Ya…”, which seemed different to me. But it wasn’t until I finally got to watch the movie Fargo one weekend that the Midwest accent struck a chord and I promptly asked him about it the following week.
Gabe was simply hilarious – he not only educated me on the subtleties of the various accents in the Midwest but he made it a point to respond to everything I said that day with a “Ya” and another “yaaa” in as many tones as possible, reliving the dialogues of that brilliant film on a mundane editorial day and making me laugh harder than I ever had in a long time. It was a side to this quiet, soft-spoken and sweetest person that I had never seen before and I absolutely loved it. I feel honored and privileged to have started my journey as an editor with Gabe. Having him next door was reassuring, comforting and always made me feel that I had someone to share anything and everything with. Gabe and I shared a common scientific lineage and had extra love for a hermaphroditic roundworm that few people in the real world care about. His wonderful sense of humor was apparent during his little blurbs during our daily editorial meetings and his rare but sonorous laughter in response to strange presubs, bizarre covers or just random e-mails was a joy to experience. We worked together on Cell’s 40th anniversary special issue and spent hours after work scratching our heads to come up with ideas and topics that would be worthy of such a special event. It took many tries but Gabe was calm as ever. He was honest when he realized we needed to stop, wind down a little or even change gears. He gifted me a tomato plant and encouraged me to take care of it, knowing very well that I have a dismal record of keeping plants alive. He would have been happy to know it in fact is doing very well despite the weather limitations. In this day and age, there are very few genuine listeners, and Gabe was one of those rare beautiful individuals who would have the patience and kindness to hear you out. I have learned so much from him in our brief journey together but more than anything, I know that I have learned to be a better human being.

Email from Emilie Marcus to Cell Press

It is with great sadness that I write to say that our Cell Press family has lost a dear friend and colleague. Gabe Hayes passed away last night peacefully, surrounded by his family and friends. Gabe was an extraordinary individual whose compassion, sincerity and intellectualism was evident the first time you met him. He was a truly gentle and steadfast soul. In our deep sadness, we are grateful for having had the chance to know him.

For anyone who would like to gather together, we will be holding a moment of silence in his honor at 11 in the reception area. To those of you in remote locations, please join us in spirit as we think of him and share in remembering all the insight, humanity and humor he brought into our world every day; we know that it is extra hard to cope with this news when you are distant from your colleagues and we are thinking of all of you today. For those in the office, the Western conference room is available today for people to gather informally in groups as you wish to support each other and reminisce. And we have arranged to have a counselor on site tomorrow for anyone who would like to speak with someone one-on-one. Wendy will be providing further information about location, times and scheduling later today.

The next few weeks and months will be an extremely difficult time for all of us as we move forward in a world without Gabe. It is a time for us to be patient with ourselves, to allow ourselves to grieve and to support each other in every way we can. It is what Gabe would have done and it is what he would want for his Cell Press family.

From Steve Mao, Cell editor

After a friend of mine who works in Gary Ruvkun’s lab learned that I had accepted the Cell editor job offer, she told me that her colleague Gabe was also going to become a Cell editor around the same time. I was very excited to hear it because I knew that I wouldn’t be the only new guy on the team. I still remember the first day I started at Cell Press. Elena told me that two other editors (Gabe and Sri) had just started a month before and introduced me to Gabe first. I was surprised because Gabe didn’t look like what I had pictured him in my mind (I pictured a younger version of Gary). He was gentle, polite and looked really sharp and professional in a
nice dress shirt. As someone who loves wearing hoodies, shorts and flip-flops, I told myself “thank god, I put on a shirt this morning!” Later I found out that Gabe loved wearing shirts with stripes or patterns and some of them were quite fancy ones with French cuffs. Yet he never looked remotely pretentious or even slightly over-dressed. I guess it was because Gabe had a nice fashion taste and perhaps more because we knew Gabe! Even just from the first impression, you would immediately associate Gabe with nothing but nice and down-to-earth.

Gabe and I took the T to Emilie’s for the feuerzangenbowle party together sometime before last Christmas and we also took a long walk together on the Steephill beach after the company’s clambake last summer. I can’t remember the specific conversation we had, but I will never forget the pleasure, kindness and calm I felt when he was around. I will always miss the pies he baked, the scientific insights he provided, and the smiles he had.

**From Lara Szewczak, Cell editor**

I went back and found the notes I made on the day Gabe interviewed. One thing I jotted down was "my sense is that he finds 'his people'", meaning that to most he would seem quiet and reserved, but that to a smaller group he would open up and truly be himself. Over the last year and half, I’ve learned that one went from seeing Gabe’s quiet reserve to enjoying his sense of humor, broad interests and good nature very, very quickly. I think that nearly everyone he met became one of "his people." I also wondered back during the interview how he’d find recruiting paper at a meeting with the Nature and Science editors lurking nearby. I think attending meetings as an editor was a challenge for Gabe (one he said he was up for during the course of his interview), and he did it with great success. I heard "I met your colleague Gabe" from so many scientists! There are many ways to make an impression as an editor and Gabe did it through personal conversations that let the scientists know he was giving their hottest results careful and thoughtful consideration.

Thinking about Gabe right now, I picture him in our editorial meeting, presenting a paper. I see his hands moving to augment his words. Moving with precise gestures that reflected the individual points he was making. It can be tough to get a word in when a bunch of opinionated editors get going about a paper, and Gabe navigated the fray well, making the points he wanted to and pushing against the tide when necessary.

I also picture him sitting on the back deck at my house during a brunch this summer. The cherry tomato plant he’d given me had just flowered and we were comparing notes about flowering times. That plant still has tomatoes on it.

**From Rosy Hosking, Cell editor**

Gabe and I are both keen amateur gardeners, though I think his fingers are much greener than mine. My two plants that live in my office are perpetually on the brink of shriveling up from neglect but I keep them going somehow. Gabe’s sweetheart plant in contrast is so lush and sturdy. Whenever one of us is away at a conference or on vacation, the other will go in to water their plants. My plants always enjoyed their sabbaticals with a diligent caretaker I think! And meanwhile, I would always try to be as conscientious in caring for Gabe’s plant when he was away as well...to the extent that my plants would be ‘green with envy’. I have had Gabe’s plant in my office for the past month, caring for it when he went to Amsterdam, and then continuing on while he was in hospital...it helped me feel close to him each day that I watered it. We had a short exchange about it when he was first at Beth Israel (below), and I now treasure Gabe’s
plant so much as a reminder of his sweet and caring nature. He has been an inspiration to us all, I hope that I can follow his example of how to live: with kindness, thoughtfulness and love.

On Oct 1, 2013, at 5:04 PM, Rosy Hosking <rosy_hosking@yahoo.co.uk> wrote:

So sorry you’re not well Gabe :(  
Your plant is enjoying an extended sabbatical chez Hosking, but very much hopes to be reunited with you soon!  
Let me know if there's anything I can do, science/editorial or otherwise while you convalesce :)  
Rosy

On Tuesday, 1 October 2013, 17:30, Gabriel Hayes <gabriel_hayes@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you, Rosy! Very nice to see my plant enjoying its vacation with its new friends.  
Thanks for your wishes. So weird to feel the hospital is exactly the place for me... But think I'm on the right track.  
All the best,  
Gabe

From Karen Carniol, Cell editor
-In his written application for the job at Cell Gabe gave several academic and inspiring answers to the questions of why he is interested in becoming an editor, and then his last line in the answer to this question was, “Finally, I dream of drinking coffee at my desk.” I laughed out loud and knew I liked him before I even met him!

-Gabe and Sri gamely volunteered to coordinate the plan for the Special Review issue marking Cell’s 40th anniversary. Organizing a review issue is a big task any year but was extra challenging since this one was not for a particular subject area, but more about the most exciting recent advances in biology, somehow organized thematically. That “somehow” was the rub since there was no clear precedent and road map for how to achieve this. The first several tries were met with dissatisfaction by Emilie. Gabe (and Sri) were completely unflappable and
The day Gabe came to interview for a scientific editor position at Cell and Cell Reports

From Boyana Konforti, Editor of Cell Reports, a Cell sister journal

The day Gabe came to interview for a scientific editor position at Cell and Cell Reports
Cell and Cell Reports were both looking for scientific editors so we decided to interview candidates that had applied to both positions together. This meant that Karen and I had to decide on papers we wanted to use for the ‘manuscript test’ in which we give the candidate an hour to read all 3 papers and then debrief. This would test their time management skills as well as their ability to read and digest the papers and finally their ability to discuss and explain the papers. A few candidates were put off immediately even by the idea of it. Others muddled through while others did better on one paper than another. During this particular round of interviews it was quite a mixed bag.

Then Gabe came with that wonderful smile of his. When we sat him down and explained what he needed to do in the hour of time, that smile of his never left his face. After an hour we checked in to see if he needed more time and he said that he didn’t so we proceeded. I explained that he would lead the discussion of the papers and then came silence. Karen and I exchanged a few worried glances thinking that this could be one of those times when the candidate ‘crashes and burns’ – a term we use when the candidate basically draws a blank or cannot discuss any of the papers in a cogent way. Instead, Gabe was just gathering his thoughts and when he was ready he began to explain the first paper. He explained the question the authors were trying to address, why it was important, how they went about addressing the question, what they found, how it fit into the previous work done in the field and then finally gave us his opinion of the work as to whether it should be sent out to review or not. All of this was what we come to expect of a seasoned professional editor that has been reading and assessing manuscripts for many years. That was the first thing that blew me away. But the other even more remarkable thing was the way in which he conveyed all this information. There was not one extraneous word. Each word was so carefully chosen. Gabe spoke in an effortless manner that was precise, spare and elegant. It gave me a glimpse of an exacting mind at work. In a word it was perfect and I do not use that word lightly. In fact I don’t think I have ever used it in the context of the manuscript test and I imagine that I never will again.

It was all that I could do not to jump out of my chair and offer him the job on the spot – I am known for my passionate feelings both positive and negative. Nonetheless, I managed to keep my composure long enough to allow Gabe to get on with the rest of his interview. I then had a chance to meet with him one-on-one at the end of the day for the wrap up. We chatted about this and that – other aspects of the job, what life as an editor was like on a day-to-day basis, etc. – but what I most remember was how happy he seemed. If he was nervous or about the interview it didn’t show. What did show was how much he loved thinking and talking about science.

As I walked him to the door of the office I asked him about his plans for the evening after such a full day. Again his face lit up as he described the classical music concert he was going to. Alright, this is someone with a number of different passions, someone with whom I could talk about many different subjects – and we did, on many occasions and I was always struck by the joy he got from the many different parts of his life. His quiet, gentle disposition could not hide the passion he felt for the people and things that meant most to him.

*From Debbie Sweet, Editor Cell Stem Cell, a Cell sister journal*

My main reaction when I think about Gabe? Quiet but effective. I interacted with him in the office and at conferences and he’s never been someone whom I would describe as loud. But, he managed to build contacts and relationships wherever he went. I would often find when we were at the same conference that scientists would say they had enjoyed meeting him and discussing their work with him. I would look out for him and often see him huddled in discussion with some leading researcher, presumably about their work. He had more stamina than me for the “social” events as well – he went to the disco when I went to bed. In the office
he also took a calm and considered approach – he would always take the time to gather information and think about a situation before bringing it up, and had logically-reasoned thoughts of his own. He was developing into a very effective editor, as was clear from the positive feedback he received from many of the scientists he interacted with. I’m not at all surprised that the Cell team say they enjoyed working with him; it was a pleasure for all of us to have him at Cell Press.

The passport story
We had been at a Gordon conference at Les Diablerets in Switzerland and were on the way home. To get us back to Geneva airport the conference had organized a bus to take us to the nearest train station, and from there we would get a train to Geneva. There was one bus and the timing was a little tight, but reasonable. About half way through the 1hr bus ride Gabe said to me “I need to go back, I just realized I left my passport in the safe in the hotel”. Oh no! We had to think about what to do. As a first step I used some of the small amount of juice left in my BlackBerry (I had managed to forget to bring the charger) to call the hotel and ask them to look in the safe to see if Gabe’s passport was there. We called back about 10 mins later and fortunately they found it, along with his wallet as well. The next step was to try to work out how to reunite Gabe with his passport so he could fly back to the US. The bus could not go back because everyone else would be late, and if we had gone back to the hotel from the train station we would definitely have missed our trains and flights. We called the hotel again to ask if they could think of a way to get the passport to us. We discussed organizing a taxi, but then they put out a call in their lobby to see if anyone was driving down to the train station area and could bring the passport – and someone was! He agreed to be the passport “courier”. So, when the bus arrived at the train station, Gabe and I got out and waited, armed with a description of the car that the “courier” was driving. There are lots of black Opel-like cars in Switzerland!! Our hopes were dashed several times. The train we had intended to get came and went. I called the “courier” (more BlackBerry juice!) and left a message in very broken French to ask where he was, but got no reply. Gabe (true to form) told me I should leave but I really didn’t want to desert him so I stayed. Finally, about 5 minutes before the train that we REALLY needed to get to avoid missing our flights was about to arrive, our knight in a shining black Opel drove up and handed us Gabe’s passport and wallet. Gabe (quickly) took out all of the Euros he had in his wallet and gave them to the Opel driver to say thank you, and then we dashed into the train station ready for the train. Great relief! After all that drama, we then had a very relaxed and convivial train journey back to Geneva talking about various things, work and personal, and both managed to catch our flights without any issues at all. But, one of my enduring memories of Gabe will be standing there with him outside that train station peering at the cars that were coming in and getting gradually more concerned, and how calm and reasonable (albeit also rather embarrassed) he was about the whole affair. That was very Gabe.

From Mirna Kvajo, Cell editor
My first memories of Gabe are of a nice guy down the hall that was patiently helping me with the day-to-day conundrums of a starting editor. Being also recently hired, I figured that he would empathize with the baffling questions that were springing up on me with almost every task that I tackled. And indeed he was there when I rather panicky tried to figure out how to call abroad for the first time, and for some of my epic attempts at filing an expense report. Thoughtful and gracious, he always took the time to give me the best possible answer, and as everyone who found themselves in strange new circumstances knows, these small acts of kindness mean a great deal. I’ll forever be grateful for that.
Afterwards, I also got to know him as the person who without fuss took up unpopular tasks for the team. I saw how he clearly cared about his authors and the outcomes of the papers he was handling. It took a while, but I also learned that underneath his quiet demeanor he had many passions and interests.

The last time we really spoke was at an office outing, and it was there that I got to know him best. He warmly told me about his partner’s exciting and unusual job as a TV moderator and about his year abroad in Hamburg. We happily swapped stories about the quirks of the region (I also lived in north Europe for some years) and I was touched by the humoristic, yet thoughtful way he described his life abroad. I remember sitting next to him, with the others from the Cell family chatting among themselves, and feeling happy for the chance to share stories and interests with this quiet member of our team. It breaks my heart now that I won’ be able to do it ever again.

**Messages from the Managing Director of Elsevier**

Dear colleagues,
I would like express how sorry I am for the loss of Gabe, your direct colleague.

Emilie had sent me several brief messages from the moment Gabe fell ill. I had only met Gabe briefly and had not had the chance to sit down with him. I do know from Emilie though, that Gabe is a colleague you are going to miss dearly.

When someone close to you has died, I know from experience how important it is to sit down together when trying to digest the why, how or what. Usually there are no answers, yet I know that just being together, is something that helps. It may not need words.

I admire you at Cell Press and Cambridge for who you are: a close-knit team, caring for each other. I hear from Emilie that you share your compassion with Gabe’s family, and that you are welcoming them at the office. As little as you may think it is: it will make an enormous difference to them in their grief.

I have by now also informed the wider STM Journals team, and tomorrow we will announce the loss of Gabe to all Elsevier colleagues.

May you remember Gabe for as long as you live.
Yours,
Philippe
Philippe Terheggen, Managing Director, STM Journals, Elsevier.

**from Joao Montiero, Cell editor**

Gabe usually would get to the office by 9:30ish, wearing sunglasses (even if there wasn’t much sunlight). And he would stop by everyone in the way to his office (across the hallway from mine) to say good morning or how are you. This speaks very much to me about the kind of person he was – a very sweet light-hearted guy. He would always come by to offer help every time he would walk by the office and see my perplexed face behind the screen.

We had many conversations about living in Boston. He was always trying to convince me that it wasn’t as bad as I make it look like. Although he would make good points, he would usually end
up agreeing with me that it wasn't as good as he made it sound. He liked classical music and we would talk a bit about my past as a musician and plan on going to see concerts this season. The last time I saw Gabe, he was leaving for the EMBO meeting in Amsterdam. He (as usual) stopped by to say hello before leaving, and our last words exchanged were ‘see in you in a few weeks’ (him from the door), and ‘see you soon’ (me from my desk). I wish I had stopped what I was doing to talk to him, give him a hug.

Selected emails from Gabe, on location:

Amsterdam Sent: Tuesday, September 24, 2013
From: Hayes, Gabriel (ELS-CMA)
I’m afraid I’m on a slow ramp to recovery. Two steps forward and one back, with today feeling like a back day. I did feel like my adventures in obtaining acetominophen from a pharmacy gave me insight into Rosy’s daily existence in a land that at first glance appears to speak her language. The pharmacist had no clue what I was looking for, but we ruled out aspirin and ibuprofen. A discussion of the properties of the stuff she called paracetamol made me pretty sure that was what I needed. She seemed to view it as a febrifuge of last resort, but I did score a box and had a better afternoon for it.

From: Hosking, Rosy (ELS-CMA)
Ah yes, the old acetaminophen/paracetamol conundrum! Glad you got through it eventually! Also means one of my favourite childhood jokes is redundant over here: Why isn’t there any aspirin in the jungle? Because the parrots eat ’em all.

From: Hayes, Gabriel (ELS-CMA)
That’s really cute, but yeah, I’m afraid it would meet with bafflement. I had a very nice visit to the Hubrecht Inst. today. Half day of visits to Marileen Dogterom’s institute tomorrow, then some time to relax here in Amsterdam and with friends in Groningen. See you next week!

Boston (while I was in London) Sent: Tue 4/2/2013
By the way, I love the cover art for the Walhout papers! I must have been out of the office when we chose it. I was surprised (and delighted) when I suddenly realized part of this seemingly abstract piece is a worm pharynx (not to mention the gut and the entire life cycle, somehow all made decorative!).

Vancouver Sent: Mon 1/21/2013
Hello from Vancouver! It’s a lovely city. It was wonderfully foggy this morning, but it cleared up, and after checking in here at the Fairmont I went for a spectacular run all the way around Stanley Park. Breathtaking views.

Copenhagen Sent: Wed 12/5/2012
Hello from snowy but charming Denmark. I’ve arrived at my hotel after some pleasant wandering around the city and am making good use of the free beer (one bottle of) in the mini fridge in my room. And as you can see, whatever wifi problem I was having at Logan is no longer plaguing me.
Copenhagen is very pleasant, lit up for Christmas. Weirdly quiet even though full of people. But nice. I look forward to seeing it in the day (or after a disco nap). Gabe