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do justice to the changes that have been made at *PRL*.

Incidentally, while the questionnaire results quoted in the report of the *PRL* review did give a C+ as the authors' view of refereeing, it should be remembered that *PRL* rejects 60% of the papers submitted, so there may be some tendency, for example, for authors to feel referees don't understand their work. The expert members of the review panel, in reading an unbiased sample of 148 files, gave grades of 98 good, 34 fair and 16 poor to the quality of refereeing. The expert panel also gave high marks to the final editorial decisions.

We have tried hard to involve the divisional associate editors in all stages of the review process. The total number of divisional associate editors has gone up from 31 prior to the report to 47. Despite the increase, the average work load of divisional associate editors has increased. We have not been able to send every paper to a divisional associate editor in all fields, as we do in particle physics and some other fields, but we have tried to learn the divisional associate editor's views on the choice of referees. Even an *ex post facto* opinion is useful, as it informs future choices. We have also worked in a variety of ways to learn the views of the divisional associate editors on the appropriateness of papers for *PRL*, including using the divisional associate editor as a first-stage "filter."

Rotating divisional associate editors more often is a possibility. However, there is a learning period, and there is substantial "overhead" in finding and appointing a divisional associate editor.

We have improved the time from receipt to acceptance since the review panel report by instituting the "one bounce" rule: Decisions are now made on papers after a maximum of one return to the author. An author can appeal a rejection, and this has increased the burden on the divisional associate editors. For the majority of papers, however, the rule has accelerated the process. The single biggest challenge to lowering (or even maintaining) the time to acceptance is the steady growth (about 8% per year) in submissions to *PRL*. This growth places an increasing stress on the resources available to *PRL*.

Finally, I would like to address the question of whether the editors should be working physicists rather than full-time editors. For a journal like *PRL*, which attempts to cover all of physics and which receives around 5000 manuscripts a year, we would need something like 20 to 30 part-time editors. It would be very difficult to maintain the uniformity of standards among different fields under such conditions. The complexity of such an operation would be great for our organization (APS), devoted as it is to fairness and freedom from individual biases. Assuring that the full-time editors are current in their knowledge of the relevant physics (and physicists) is important. We address this first of all by our system of divisional associate editors and their close working relationship with the editors. Second, the editors maintain their contacts in physics by attending meetings, conferences, relevant divisional activities and so forth.

I think our system has worked fairly well. As Nauenberg points out, it could work even better, and we are trying to accomplish that.

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In a recent letter Mark Azbel shows how peer reviewing probably would have stopped Columbus from getting to Isabella's front door. I think he is optimistic: Peer reviewing probably would have questioned his ability to walk or required him to fly.

The way I see it, there is really only one major problem with peer reviewing, and that is the anonymity. Not only should the identity of the referees be made known; they should appear on the published paper, perhaps even in the by-lines! This has a great many advantages. It would give the referees more reason to do their best, since they would like to see their names in print, especially after having slaved over a difficult paper. At the same time they would be much more careful, not wanting to be caught mandating garbage, and furthermore it would soon become clear whom an author should request to be excluded as a referee.

I seriously believe that this whole matter should be put to a vote in some form or other to all members of the APS, and that perhaps a revised form of refereeing should be implemented for all journals published by the American Institute of Physics.

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Correction

February, page 89—The line "Not with a bang but a whimper" is from T. S. Eliot's "The Hollow Men." ■