

authors. In my opinion the author, not the reviewer, is responsible for the presentation. In extreme cases, repeated failure to correct faulty presentation is a valid reason for rejection. I welcome correction of the English by the reviewer but consider it an act of kindness, not an obligation.

The report should be written like a short term paper. The first few sentences should summarize the reviewer's opinion of the manuscript and the recommendation as to its disposition. The rest of the report should give arguments in support and, for manuscripts not rejected, suggest improvements. The report should be as brief as is consistent with completeness. Cute style should be avoided. Sometimes it is convenient for the reviewer to mark corrections on the manuscript; otherwise, some days can be saved by sending the report alone via fax or e-mail. Next to quality, promptness is the characteristic most desired; it is better to send a manuscript back without review by return mail than to hold on to it for months.

STEVEN J. ROTHMAN
Journal of Applied Physics
Argonne, Illinois

Name that Reviewer

The system of having articles refereed before publication by experts in the field has served the sciences and other scholarly fields well. However, it can be improved, and we would like to make a proposal that we trust will do so. We suggest that the journals of the American Institute of Physics adopt a policy of publishing on the front page of each article the names of the reviewers who recommended publication. If publication has been denied, the name of the reviewers will remain unknown to all but the editor.

If a manuscript has been recommended for publication, one can hardly fear hard feelings from the authors. If a reviewer is not willing to have his or her name associated with an article, that is, is not proud to have recommended its publication, the paper does not have the necessary support of that reviewer to warrant publication.

We believe such a simple change will go a long way toward improving the refereeing of journal articles. For most individuals, having a colleague point out obvious errors in papers that he or she reviewed will be sufficiently embarrassing for that person to cause him or her to try hard not to repeat the experience. We therefore

predict that the standards for publication will rise significantly. On occasion, a reviewer will recommend publication of a flawed article, because, for example, the experimental results are unexpected and need to be considered by the community, even if the reviewer has grave doubts about the explanation offered by the authors. In those cases the reviewer can write a short comment giving his or her reservations. If the editor and authors want to go ahead with publication despite these objections, then the reviewer's signed comments should appear along with the published article.

This change will mean more work for the editors of journals. More articles will be rejected, which certainly will lead to more appeals and perhaps rancor. Reviewers will more often return manuscripts unreviewed, either for lack of time to do a careful job or because they do not have confidence in their own expertise in the field of the manuscript. It will be obvious when editors overuse a handful of reviewers or, worse, consistently give special treatment to some individuals. But such changes will result in an improvement in journals. Consistent with our proposal for increased accountability, in journals with multiple editors, the accepting editor should be acknowledged in the publication as well.

We have heard from several senior (and busy) colleagues that our proposed change would be impractical because too many potential referees would refuse to review the manuscripts sent to them. We have the following replies. First, journals are not well served by hasty reviews that their own authors are ashamed to be publicly associated with. Second, if the cost of increasing the quality of published articles is that the volume of published material is somewhat reduced, we believe that to be a price well worth the cost. Lastly, individuals who consistently refuse to referee submissions, even those clearly in their fields, should simply be told by editors that their own manuscripts are no longer welcome.

KEVIN K. LEHMANN
GIACINTO SCOLES
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

A Glass of Wine, a Garden Walk—Virtually?

Long inured against media hype and election campaign pledges, I did not feel overly worried when, in the early 1990s, the first breathless

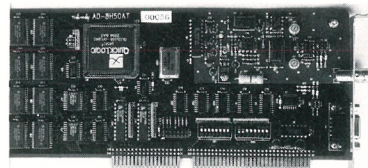
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Requests should preferably be made by fax: +31-3402 31204 or by e-mail: lauravV@rijnh.nl.

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