

Guest Editorial

Effective 1 May 1980, all publications of the American Physical Society will be under the general direction of a single Editor-in-Chief who will have the responsibility for coordinating and optimizing all APS journals (*Physical Review*, *Physical Review Letters*, *Reviews of Modern Physics*, *Bulletin of the American Physical Society*, and *Physical Review Abstracts*). The Editor-in-Chief will also serve as an officer of the Society, a statutory member of the Council, the Executive Committee, and the Publications Committee. By the vagaries of a Search Committee and a bit of arm-twisting, I have been selected to occupy this chair.

My prior experience in such a capacity is essentially nil. Except for a couple years as a member of the Publications Committee during my prior tenure as Divisional Councillor for DCMP, my experience with our journals has been similar to yours: I have been a *user*, as author and reader. I have had my own share of arguments with our editors and my own gripes about what's wrong with the system. In fact, this note will be the first bit of my prose accepted by PRL in over 10 years! My nearly total ignorance of the details of our publications business has at least one salutary side effect: I start this job with a blissful lack of bias.

My long term goal for our publications is simple. I want our journals to be the best in the world, to include timely, well-written reports of all the best of the work done by all active physicists. To accomplish this end the general criteria are, *a priori*, also simple. All decisions should be based on whether or not they contribute to the utility of our journals from the viewpoint of the *users*, the authors and readers. From my limited vantage point at this phase, I would say we were not optimal and that a number of our policies, even of our journals, may have to be changed somewhat in the long run.

To formulate a consistent program, I appeal to *you*, all our readers and authors, to write to me and tell me of your pleasures and displeasures with our current journals. All comments and complaints, however scurrilous and anecdotal, will be received and considered. Your suggestions for ways of improving our publications would be particularly welcome. For the next several months, I shall be operating as a yo-yo between two addresses, and your letter will have a 50% probability of reaching me without forwarding at either one:

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I have accepted this role with more than a bit of trepidation. It is clear that at least one of my duties will be to keep the peace, both internally and externally; in Harry Truman's words, "The buck stops here." My 31 years in academia, as a teacher and experimental physicist, have not necessarily endowed me with the Solomonic wisdom needed to do this job with tact and finesse. I shall do my best.

David Lazarus