

# Journal of Spacecraft and Rockets

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## A New Journal and Its Editors

**T**HE decision of the AIAA Board that additional journals should be published in 1964 resulted from many deliberations over many proposals and committee reports, but at least three points were recognized by all of the proposals: 1) a greater total publishing outlet was needed, so that no *original, significant* paper would be turned away for the reason of inadequate publishing space; 2) although the contributions of the "engineer" and the "scientist" are inescapably interwoven in the great ventures of aeronautics and astronautics today, there had been a lingering tendency to look down on "engineering" papers which described *applications* of new knowledge to such ventures, and in fact, the 1963 outlet of AIAA for such papers had been inadequate; and 3) a large fraction of the membership feared that the *aeronautics* of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics was being overlooked. To fulfill these needs, this *Journal of Spacecraft and Rockets* and its counterpart for aeronautics, the *Journal of Aircraft*, have been created. They are intended to be full technical partners to the continuing, respected *AIAA Journal*—equal in quality, in value to the portion of the AIAA membership each will serve, and in professional recognition among authors and readers, Members and Corporate Members, and institutions and their libraries. Although these new journals are not, at present, equal in size (or price) to the *AIAA Journal*, the initial subscription response on the part of the members has already validated the wisdom of the decision of the AIAA Board to establish them.

It now falls to you—the generators, reviewers, and users of technical papers—and to us—the editors—to see that these new journals, with the *AIAA Journal*, accomplish these aims and satisfy the needs of our Institute, and that they take an appropriate and respected place within the burgeoning technical literature of our time.

Each journal carries its scope statement on its inside front cover. It is unavoidable, and indeed it is desirable, that there be some overlap among the three. Whereas *AIAA J.* will continue to emphasize new research and exploratory developments of rather fundamental character, *JSR* and *JA*

will be primarily interested in *significant applications and effects* of such new knowledge in the fields of astronautics and aeronautics, respectively. A grey area is bound to exist between *JSR* and *JA*, and it is also certain to shift with time. An illustrative example is that (for the year 1964, at least) papers dealing with aerospace planes should go into *JSR*, and papers on the X-15 should go into *JA*.

All papers preprinted for AIAA meetings are automatically considered for publication, together with papers submitted directly to the Editorial Offices. In addition to the three journals and the magazine, *Astronautics and Aeronautics*, either of two optional publishing outlets is available for papers from special meetings. One is a volume in the series, *Progress in Astronautics and Aeronautics*. These volumes contain selected papers (the rest are referred to the journals) from a given meeting, carefully edited by special editors appointed in advance by the responsible Technical Committee(s), under the general direction and with the approval of the Series Editor, Dr. Martin Summerfield. The second special form of publication is an unedited, paperbound volume of all preprints. The latter is considered quasipublication; the journal and magazine editors do consider papers in such paperbound volumes but are not obligated to process them further.

Individual papers are divided among the three journals and the magazine, in accordance with their respective scope statements and the judgment of the Editors, who make the final decisions on acceptability. Of course, any preference voiced by an author is given full consideration.

The responsibilities and operating procedures of Editors and Associate Editors of journals of the AIAA are much the same as those described by Dr. Martin Summerfield when he was Editor of one of the predecessors [*ARS Journal* 32, 314-315 (1962)], but some of the main features should be appropriately paraphrased and expanded here.

Each Editor personally examines each manuscript logged to his journal. Of the short manuscripts, he may accept directly those worthy of publication as Notes or Comments,

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#### Editor-in-Chief

B.Ch.E. 1944, and M.S.E. 1947, University of Florida. Ph.D. (Chemical Engineering) 1953, Case Institute of Technology.

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### ROBERT E. FISHELL

#### Associate Editor

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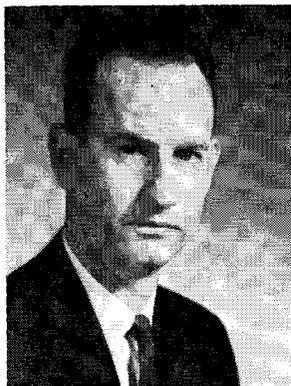
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or he may obtain reviews in marginal cases. Of the longer papers, the Editor will himself act upon that fraction which falls in his own professional field and will assign the rest to the various Associate Editors, according to their complementary fields of knowledge and editorial responsibility. At this point, those papers considered to be worthy of serious consideration are sent to reviewers (usually two), accom-

panied by Confidential Review Report forms (The same form will be used for all three journals.)

The final editorial judgment on a paper depends heavily on these review reports. It is therefore fitting to address a *plea to reviewers: Be as thorough, impartial, and constructive in completing Confidential Review Reports as you would wish another to do for your own paper.* We received many exemplary reports during 1963, but we also received many that were of little help to either editor or author. Detailed comments which bear on the validity and significance of analyses, tests, and conclusions are most important. The reviewers' judgment of the over-all worth of a paper also carries much weight, but the editor is not bound to accept automatically the judgment of reviewers in this respect; in fact, reviewers often disagree.

When questions remain unresolved among reviewers, editor, and author, "it is our policy to lean in favor of the author, for it is better to risk the publication of an occasional poor paper than to throttle a potentially stimulating idea." In this connection, however, the Editors of *JSR* and *JA* may exert a greater degree of judgment based on knowledge of current developments than would be the case for the *AIAA J.*, because of the nature of the papers. For example, a vehicle design concept may be known to have been superseded by a *better* (not just *different*) concept for valid practical reasons, and, although the paper in question may have deserved an oral airing at an AIAA meeting, it may not merit journal publication.

Now let us offer some advice to authors who wish their papers to be given serious consideration for journal publication and to be processed rapidly:

1) Papers should be prepared in accordance with the "Information for Contributors" printed on the inside back cover of each journal. Two frequent faults are excessive length (due to verbosity, redundancies, and poor organization) and poorly prepared illustrations, particularly with respect to inadequate lettering size — a *good* slide will usually make a good figure in  $3\frac{1}{4}$ -in. journal column width.

2) *Papers should be technical in character and tone.* Editors and reviewers will not accept sales pitches in papers for journal publication.

3) If a paper is accepted for publication subject to revision, the author should *accomplish the revisions rapidly*, within the deadline given him, *or let us know why he cannot*, so that proper adjustments can be made. We must keep our flow of papers as stable as possible, and we have no obligation to carry delinquent papers in our files indefinitely.

We often call upon members of the AIAA Technical Committees as reviewers of papers, and upon their Chairmen for advice on publication policy and for aid in the selection of papers worthy of review. The Technical Committees for 1963 were listed in the July 1963 issue of *Astronautics and Aerospace Engineering*, and the list of Technical Committees and their chairmen will be printed in each issue of the *AIAA Bulletin*.

In conclusion, we hope that with your help we will be successful in providing the journals you want and need. Again, from Dr. Summerfield, "I may have given the impression that we editors are comprehensively knowledgeable, faultlessly thorough, and tolerantly wise in all our decisions. We are not. We simply try to be."

G. L. Dugger, *Editor-in-Chief*