

Organic Process Research & Development

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Editorial

Oh Oh Oh. What a Referee!¹

A recent article in the January 2006 edition of *Chemistry World*² discussed the issue of whether reviewers/referees of papers should be paid for what they do. I do not want to go down that track, but I would like to emphasise the value that our reviewers/referees bring to papers.

Very recently, an excellent referee for a paper that was particularly badly written helped the author so much that he almost rewrote the paper for him. Perhaps the author should have invited him to be a coauthor on the paper! This is almost beyond the call of duty, but many referees do spend a lot of time, particularly on the papers which have not been written well or where the author's command of English is lacking! We could simply reject the paper, but often the science is good enough to be published so that we try to work closely with the author to improve the paper.

However, many papers are submitted for which either proofreading has not been properly done or a second opinion from a senior member of the author's department (preferably with a good understanding of English) would have eliminated many of the errors and improved the English. Authors have a duty to minimize the workload of the unpaid referees, and

as editor-in-chief, I have returned papers to authors without refereeing them if I felt that they were not "fit" to be sent out, even though the science was interesting and novel.

We still need more "good" referees—those who are prepared to invest the time to critically review—and usually improve—the papers which are submitted. So if you are an experienced process chemist or engineer, please volunteer. We will send you only one or two papers a year. The more referees we have, the lower the workload for each referee.

Finally, a very big thank you to all those of you who have refereed papers in the past. You have done a fantastic job. Please keep up the good work, and also recommend to us any of your colleagues who you think will also make excellent reviewers.

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- (1) The title of an old UK football song.
(2) May, P. *Chem. World* **2006**, (Jan), 72.

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