

Stabilized

AS reported by Gordon Dugger in the October 1972 *Astrophysics & Aeronautics*—"AIAA Publications Are Alive and Well"—we have for the moment at least met the challenge of increasing costs accompanied with decreasing budgets, and have stayed within budget. The situation has been stabilized.

The task of reducing our costs has not been easy. Overseas printing as well as new printing techniques in this country are being used, editors have assumed some of the communication load previously performed by the New York Office, SDD studies have ceased, and the Synoptic has reduced our printing volume. Author-prepared manuscripts and miniprints have been considered as further ways of reducing costs, and, although a clear majority of those responding to *The* questionnaire would seemingly approve it, the latter two innovations will not be introduced in the near future. The reasons are twofold. First, although the majority of the responders would seem to accept it, a majority of the authors would not. Therefore, we stand to lose some of our better contributors if these steps are taken. Second, these steps are clearly a reduction in journal quality whereas it can be argued that our previous innovations are not. Consequently, your Publications Committee in session in June 1972 voted that no further steps would be taken which might degrade the journals "unless extreme circumstances dictate the need for them after all other means of effecting economies within the Institute have been accomplished." Thus, the crisis has reduced to a stable level. However, the editors, the staff, and the Publications Committee will not rest on their laurels; we will continue to search for economies that will not affect the quality of the journals.

If we look at the number of complaint letters this past year and compare them to the number in the previous year, we get a warm feeling that we are giving better service. However, the bubble bursts when we look at some of the remarks received in the questionnaire. Clearly many authors are disturbed about Synoptics, the time lag between submission to publication, and the quality of some review reports.

Some authors have withdrawn their papers when asked to prepare a Synoptic. We are sorry that this has happened, but in each case where we ask for a Synoptic, we are convinced that the broader reader coverage of the summary paper outweighs the loss of detail immediately available to the reader. Actually few requests for Synoptic backup papers have been received. This may mean that the preprint and company reports have adequately supplied the reader needs and/or our Synoptic selection has been good, or the reader cannot be bothered with the cost and inconvenience of obtaining the backup paper. Independent of these uncertainties and the specific criticism of Synoptics, the large numerical majority acceptance of Synoptics convinces us that the Synoptic should be continued.

We will take another look at the problem of time required between submission and publication. The controlling factor is the review process. If a single point decision of the editor to publish as is or not publish were the procedure, then we could probably reduce to zero our complaints about time. But!! We find the aerospace technology to be an extremely diffuse one. It is difficult to find an associate editor with enough breadth to select reviewers, let alone single-handedly review the papers. Therefore, the decision must be to have papers reviewed by the author's peers. Having made that decision, we are faced with an inevitable time lag to obtain the reviews and get the papers revised, and when the review has been obtained, the author must be given an opportunity to revise. All this takes time. We will review the process again and do our best to keep time to a minimum.

Regarding the quality of review reports, it is the responsibility of the associate editor to get the best reviewer possible. That is a tough job, because a journal such as JSR has six associate editors to cover the many disciplines involved in aerospace engineering. However, we will be sensitive to suggestions for improvements, and offers to help us in this difficult selection process will be most welcome.

We reported a year ago that our submissions were down 30% as a result of the cutback in aerospace R&D. At this writing we appear to have stabilized the volume near this reduced level. Actually it is difficult to tell, because the submissions ranged in a 12-month period from a low in December 1971 of 11 to a high of 43 in May 1972, but it is expected that the JSR will continue in 1973 at about the same level as in 1972. This optimism, if you view nongrowth at this juncture as optimism, is based upon the present projected interest in deep space, such as the Large Space Telescope and Viking and the interest in the Shuttle. We have several interesting papers coming in on the Shuttle, and we expect a continued flow from the unmanned space programs.

Still to be solved is the relation of our journal structure to the burgeoning civil sector of R&D. JSR will publish papers from the Environmental Pollution Sensing Conference when the papers tie closely to our present charter. However, it was a little frustrating to decide not to publish some papers from the Second Urban Technology Conference because that conference produced several papers of archival quality. In evaluating them for JSR, it was decided that each paper of archival quality was not at the moment within our scope. When does a ground transportation paper using aerospace technology belong in an aerospace journal? There is no clear answer to that even though it is clear that this aerospace society and its technology is and should be involved in the broader needs of our society. Perhaps as the AIAA role in environmental and urban technologies becomes clearer, it will be desirable to broaden the scopes of our journals to include more papers from this sector.

So we enter 1973 with a feeling that we have made the transition from the rarified atmosphere of large aerospace budgets to the present lower and more turbulent levels, and we are in a stable mode.

This month we welcome Dr. Bernard Paiewonsky to the masthead. Bernie is no stranger to the journals, both as an author and editor, having served in the latter capacity for both the *ARS Journal* and *AIAA Journal*. He replaces Dr. Donald Fraser who has done an outstanding job for JSR covering optimal control and astrodynamics.

Dr. Francis French has completed a three-year term, but will continue into a second term. Francis has provided remarkable versatility in covering all the odd jobs from chemical propulsion to space science experiments. We are happy to keep him aboard.

Another outstanding performance is being delivered by Dr. Paul F. Holloway who joined us a year ago to edit the aerodynamic papers. Of course, we expect and get the usual high quality editorial and business functions from the professional Ruth Bryans, Anne Huth, and staff. On this end, my ubiquitous secretary, Eleanor Johnson, has once again kept the papers flowing and handled the complex communications of JSR with deceptive ease.

Finally, we would like to thank the many reviewers listed on p. 2 for giving their time and talent to review our many manuscripts prior to publication.

RALPH R. RAGAN
Editor-in-Chief