

## The *Journal* Evolves

It has been a privilege to work as Editor of *AICHE Journal*. Contrary to the vaguer, less satisfying, impressions that are sometimes gained by glimpses of the publication process as author or referee, total immersion in the process, as I have experienced for the last decade, will leave anyone, on balance, overwhelmingly impressed by our colleagues and confident in the power of rigorous peer review. The aggregate magnitude of excellent, voluntary work put into reviewing manuscripts is staggering; at its best, which I have seen often, refereeing is done with generous measures of creativity, analytical insight and wisdom. It has been a rare quarter in the last ten years that we have accepted half of the manuscripts we have been offered.

The *Journal* has changed since I started in 1991. Associate Editors have been added. Topical headings now highlight work in different areas and particularly draw attention to emerging areas. A new *Perspectives* section, edited by Julio Ottino, has led off each issue of the *Journal* for the last year. Submissions have increased by 50% over the decade of the 1990s. All of this indicates the health and vitality of the *Journal* and the field. More change looms with electronic publication.

Clearly, Stan Sandler and the Associate Editors will have important and new jobs to do. Though form and media may change, nothing replaces the test of scrutiny by critical referees and editors for archival publication. On the other hand, the desire to communicate quickly and broadly is less well served by this traditional system than by unrefereed, immediate electronic publication. James Langer, my UC Santa Barbara colleague and American Physical Society President, in the August 2000 issue of *Physics Today*, points out that among physicists, there is a growing contingent that feels it no longer needs refereed print publications. An electronic archive serves the need of many for rapid communication and wide dissemination of information. There is no system except caveat emptor to prevent mediocre contributions or, even worse, to remove erroneous work from the record. However, work that is interesting and exciting receives instant attention and a form of trial-by-fire resulting from immediate follow-up.

I believe there will be an increasing need for this type of electronic forum. The challenge will be to merge effectively the needs for and practices of electronic and archival publications, perhaps each with different norms and practices for peer review. Moreover, we have only begun to explore the capacity of electronic media for new publication formats.

While comprehensive thanks are beyond the scope of this page, I am especially grateful to Managing Editor Haeja Han, Copy Editor Arthur Baulch, and Editorial Assistant Mingjen Chen for the dedicated and highly competent work they have given to *AICHE Journal*. The excellent support for the *Journal* from AIChE gives me confidence to welcome Stan Sandler to this job with the assurance that he will find it as stimulating and engaging as I have.



**Matthew V. Tirrell**