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Editorial

Request for New Reviewers

It was very encouraging for the Editors to receive more than 30 manuscripts in the first month of 2002. Of course, many of these papers are intended for the special issue on Biocatalysis which will appear later in 2002, but there are certainly more papers than usual on mainstream organic process R & D. If this carries on, it will present the Editors with an additional problem—shortage of reviewers/referees for the papers.

Occasionally we experience some difficulties in finding reviewers with the appropriate expertise in certain areas (e.g., polymer chemistry). There is also a need for more reviewers in general, since several of our senior reviewers have retired or have left their companies during the continuing reorganizations that affect (or should that be infect?) industry.

Conscientious reviewers are essential for the peer review process—the critical but helpful comments made by the reviewers enhance the quality of the accepted papers and make sure that work of poor quality, or work that has already been published, is rejected. Authors often thank reviewers for pointing out critical scientific errors in papers, as well as omissions and typographical mistakes.

Reviewers have ethical obligations (see the Ethical Guidelines in issue No. 1 of *Organic Process Research & Development*, 2002) which include confidentiality and conflicts of interest issues, as well as the need for high scientific standards. The names of reviewers are, of course, never disclosed to authors by the editorial offices.

I am therefore asking once again for volunteers from scientists and engineers who are willing to review one or

two papers per year. Whilst 1–2 papers is not an arduous task, it is one that involves a responsibility and commitment to spend time on each paper, critically analysing the science/technology for accuracy, for soundness of ideas, and for plagiarism, which unfortunately is becoming all too common these days in the scientific literature. A key aspect in a good review is to make sure that the paper is well referenced and that the references are comprehensive and accurate.

Volunteers for this prestigious (but unpaid) task should contact the Editors in the first instance. The editorial office will send you a questionnaire listing possible expertise areas, and you will tick those you feel comfortable in reviewing. These expertise areas are entered into the editorial office computer so that we can quickly search for the appropriate referees when a new paper comes in.

When a paper is sent for review, the Editors request from the reviewer a fast turnaround so that the paper can be published quickly. Two to three weeks from receipt of the paper is the ideal—this turnaround time is much enhanced when papers are submitted electronically via the secure website. It is essential that those volunteering to review papers commit to speedy as well as competent reviewing.

I look forward to receiving emails from new volunteers whose expertise covers the whole spectrum from organic chemistry to chemical engineering.

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