

Editors' Notes

EDITORS' REPORT. SEPTEMBER 1991

Let me begin with what seems like a formality each year, but which is in truth a genuine expression of gratitude. This Journal could not be produced without the dedicated and superb work of our various assistants. My colleague, Joshua Rosenbloom, has continue to ease my work by acting as the book review editor. Pamela Evans has kept the California office humming, has provided me with some enjoyable exchanges regarding the journal's style, and is now really getting into the quantitative analysis of our activities. Our editorial offices can concentrate on the scholarly end of things because the financial affairs are well taken care of by Bill and RuthAnne Becker, and because Byrd Press continues to do a fine job printing the final product. We are, of course, indebted to the University of Kansas and University of California at Davis for providing necessary and substantial financial support.

You may have noticed I skipped over thanking my assistant, Donna Gullett. As they say in the real world—she is no longer with the firm. Donna has gone on to bigger things and perhaps better ones, although she has her doubts. She completed her MBA with flying colors (apparently I did not make her work hard enough) and has taken a job with a large consulting firm in Kansas City. She has also gotten married. I am very grateful for the fine job she did over the past three years. Donna actually liked her job as assistant editor and tried to find a career position that would have let her keep on editing the journal. When her new employer suggested she do it in the evenings and on weekends as community service work, she changed her mind.

With commencement, marriage, and a changing of the guard some of you may have noticed a slight delay in our processing of your manuscript or returning your phone call. We apologize to those who might have been affected, and promise to do better. This puts a lot of pressure on Donna's replacement, but he seems capable of handling it. Her successor is Brian Black, who was lured away from the Big Apple to take the job and has made a very favorable first impression.

We are especially grateful to our referees this year because they had more work to do. The number of submissions was sharply higher than it had averaged in the preceding five years—totaling 138, rather than 120; both figures excluding the Tasks Issue. There was, in particular, a flood of American papers, an increase of 23 over last year. Some other editor might use the T word to describe the sharp 37 percent increase in submissions on the American side, accompanied as it were by the emergence of money and macro as the leading sector, the development of new institutional arrangements, and by the likelihood of self-sustaining controversy. In this year of the Greg Clark book review I shall forego calling it a take-off.

The acceptance rate has remained about the same as last year—roughly one in six or seven articles was accepted. The rate was identical in both offices so consequently more American articles were accepted. Non-American papers fell into the revise and resubmit category more frequently than American, reflecting no doubt the optimism of those new to the office. The American editor prefers now to reject papers. In the Tasks Issue we published 12 of the papers given at the annual meeting held in Montreal.

The distribution of papers by field is summarized in the accompanying table. Feel free to use that raw data however you wish, keeping in mind that the allocation of each paper to a field is arbitrary.

I can report again favorable results for the new statistic introduced last year: the length of time to publication. Those articles submitted and accepted for publication during the current reporting period have been or will be published within roughly one year from the date submitted. The average for the entire journal, excluding the Tasks

TABLE I
SUMMARY OF THE JOURNAL'S OFFICE ACTIVITY JULY 1, 1990 TO JUNE 30, 1991

	Regular Submissions by Office			
	American	Other	Total	
Number of Submissions	86	52	138	
Accepted	13	8	21	
Revise & Resubmit	7	12	19	
Pending	11	3	14	
Rejected (or withdrawn)	52	28	80	
Returned	3	—	3	
Submissions by Quarter				
July, Aug., Sept.	24	13	37	
Oct., Nov., Dec.	19	14	33	
Jan., Feb., March	22	15	37	
April, May, June	21	10	31	
Time to Decision	—number of days ^a —			
All Submissions	70	88	79	
Acceptances	79	96	87	
Rejections	68	86	76	
Revisions	94	81	88	
Time to Publication	334	432	383	
	Submissions		Acceptances	
<i>Distribution by Field</i>	American	Other	American	Other
Agriculture	6	9	1	1
Demography	6	5	2	2
Growth	2	7		
Industry	11	7		3
Technology	0	2		
Labor	12	4	5	
Money and Macro	21	6	3	1
Public Finance	4	3		1
History of Thought	4	2	1	
Trade	4	2		
Urban and Regional	5		1	
Political Economy	8	5		
Totals	86	52	13	8

^a The combined results are simple averages.

Issue, is 383 days (the simple average of the result for the two offices). The non-American office took slightly longer reflecting a number of factors beyond the control of Peter Lindert and Pamela Evans. The nature of their product involves longer communication delays with authors and referees from around the world; the American side is hampered only by the Canadian mail system. In any event, the time to acceptance, which is of utmost concern to authors is relatively low in both offices, about three months.

A little arithmetic will suggest that the time to publication will suffer in the near future. With submissions up, the acceptance rate about the same, and the size of the journal unchanged, the publication of some articles will be postponed a bit. Nevertheless, in comparison with other journals our material is hot off the press.

It may surprise many of you, probably most, to know that we have a style sheet. It specifies what we politely call guidelines, but which in fact are rules—designed to assure consistency in the final product. Adherence to the rules early on in the process makes life easier for those in the editorial offices, increases the chance that the final product

will look the way you envisioned it, and may subconsciously make us more favorably disposed toward the submission in the first place. The sad news is, at least by my rough counting, that only a handful of contributors asks for a style sheet in any year. Worse, it appears that only a fraction of those authors read the thing! The sheet contains lots of useful items, among which is the fact that we now require a reference list and use the short form of citation in all footnotes. The rules also specify that "the preferred length [of manuscripts] is 30–35 pages, double-spaced, all elements (footnotes, tables, diagrams, and list of references) included" and "use standard size of type (this is important for gauging length and assuring accurate typesetting)." I mention these two items because there are some nefarious trends apparent in recent submissions. Papers are getting longer, and authors are resorting to smaller and smaller type in order to keep the length down. In at least one case, the text was in six point type, and as best as I could tell the footnotes were single-spaced micro-dots. This was from a friend of mine!

We are not going to take it any more! Papers that do not comply with those guidelines will be returned to the authors. In fact, if you look at the year's summary statistics you will notice a new category—"Returned"—that shows three occurrences. This is only the tip of the iceberg as we began to implement this practice only in the last month or two of the reporting period. We may make an exception for a truly important paper, but those such as "The Industrial Distribution of the Urban and Rural Workforces in the United States," no matter how pathbreaking they may seem to you (or me in the case cited), will not be allowed excess length.

I should absolve my co-editor of any guilt in this. Papers come first to the Kansas office, so it is just my doing. In part, I have taken on this role in an attempt to straighten out authors before my successor takes over next year. The fact is that space in the journal is at a premium, and becoming more so, while rumor has it that the time of our referees is also valuable. Moreover, experience has indicated that judicious but substantial condensation makes for a more clear and forceful article. The same might be said of editorial reports, but you will have to wait until next year to find that out.

In addition to the members of the editorial board, we are greatly indebted to many outside referees for their generous assistance during the year. Their names will appear in the June issue.

LOIS GREEN CARR—THE CHESAPEAKE AND BEYOND: A CELEBRATION

A conference titled "Lois Green Carr—The Chesapeake and Beyond: A Celebration" will be held at the University of Maryland, College Park, on 22–23 May 1992.

Sessions will be devoted to assessing the state of scholarship in the several areas in which Dr. Carr has made significant contributions. There will be papers by, among others, Jack P. Greene, Jacob Price, Jackson Turner Main, Lorena Walsh, Russell Menard, and Richard Dunn. Bernard Bailyn will give the keynote address. A celebratory banquet is scheduled for Friday evening and there will be a reception at the Maryland State Archives on Saturday evening. The conference is sponsored by the University of Maryland, University of Minnesota, Historic St. Mary's City, the Maryland State Archives, and the Division of Historical and Cultural Programs.

For more information about the conference, please write to Dr. Jean Russo, 3307 Wake Drive, Kensington, Maryland 20895.