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BESS Newsletter

Biosystems Engineering and Soil Science
Publications and Other Works

5-18-2009

BESS 5/18/09

Department of Biosystems Engineering and Soil Sciences

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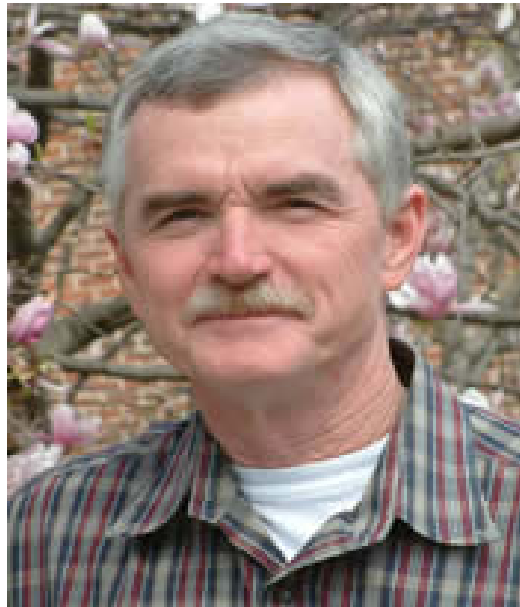
Department of Biosystems Engineering and Soil Sciences, "BESS 5/18/09" (2009). *BESS Newsletter*.
https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_BESS/15

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TOP STORIES

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- ["NSF to fund Ag Research -- to enhance global small farm/subsistence agriculture"](#)
- ["EPA to provide grants and cooperative agreements to fund pollution prevention activities"](#)
- ["Sustainable Ag Brainstorming Meeting – May 29, 9 a.m., PBB 410"](#)
- ["Responding to Journal Decisions" by Wendy Laura Belcher, Princeton University](#)



STAFF PROFILE

GARY HONEA will retire at the end of June this year. He will continue to work two days per week for a while, but beginning in July there will be a lot more time for his cabin in Middle Tennessee.

Gary received his BS in Agricultural Engineering and his MS in Ag Engineering with a concentration in Water Quality, both from UT. He spent the 20 years between earning those two degrees in the US Air Force, and received an MS in Management from Troy State

while in the Service.

Gary enjoys extension work, partly because it involves being helpful to people (especially farmers), and being outdoors so much is a bonus. His first thought for a career once he finished his Master's degree was to become a county Extension Agent, as Gary was raised on a small farm and stayed interested in agriculture throughout his Air Force career. However, an Extension Assistant I position working in research and extension with Jim Wills became available as Gary finished his MS, and Gary took it.

It is hard to talk about either Jim or Gary without mentioning the other. As Gary was hired as Jim's assistant, they have spent most of the past 13 years working together. Even though the work is sometimes very hard, it is obvious that the two enjoy working together. There is always laughter when the two of them are together.

Gary's position is based in Extension, with nearly half of his time spent with Ag Research. The Extension portion is related to Farm Machinery, and covers such things as calibration of motors and sprayers, as well as the occasional opinion on how to improve the effectiveness of a mechanized procedure. Jim and Gary were also involved in the Master Gardener program, and have given several lawnmower clinics. In the early years most of Gary's research activity was spent on the Vegetable Initiative Project. Some fruits were included in the project, and the research done on blueberries has yielded a lot of information. Later work has included development, installation, and monitoring of a large water quality data collection, showing Gary's flexibility and range of abilities. ([more here](#))

From the Department Head:

The College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources Commencement Ceremony was held May 6 in Thompson Boling Arena. BESS was well represented by Drs. John Tyner, Neal Eash and Eric Drumm, as degrees in Biosystems Engineering and in Environmental and Soil Science were awarded at both the BS and MS level (see box [here](#) for listing of students). In addition, Dustin Eash, a long time student worker and BESS departmental favorite son received his BS degree in Agricultural Education.

On May 12, Ms. Lois Stinnett, Accounting Specialist II was recognized for 25 years of service to UT. A luncheon sponsored by UTK Human Resources was held on the east campus, followed by a UTIA reception at the Hollingsworth Auditorium. Dean Caula Beyl presented Lois a plaque in appreciation of her service, and made some nice comments ([continued here](#)).

MORE NEWS – CLICK BELOW

BESS

Students

CASNR

Research

Extension

UTIA

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BESS
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Please submit items to Darla O'Neill doneill1@utk.edu
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Staff Profile (continued from front page):

Much of Gary's time has been spent working with data loggers (devices that monitor and record data over time). Results of this data collection can be seen on the Vegetable Initiative Project web page: <http://bioengr.ag.utk.edu/Extension/ExtProg/Vegetable/>. Photos show a data logger station, plus other ways of collecting data such as counting and measuring.

Gary has helped Jim carry 80# bags of concrete mix through Ellejroy Creek to build weirs, and spent many days digging potatoes in hot dry fields. The blueberry project has been in progress for more than 8 years, and the water quality project about half that long. Gary says that he has worked with lots of different equipment and people, and has had a great time doing it. His co-workers have been good people to work with, including the "hands" and researchers on the Ag Research Centers, faculty, other staff, and students.

Most of Gary's career has been focused on serving others, and it is likely that even in retirement it will continue that way. We thank him for his wonderful years of service to our department, and wish him the long and happy retirement that he deserves. ---Margaret Taylor



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Doug Hayes was recently featured in the Office of Bioenergy Programs Winter 2009 Newsletter. (Subscribe here: <http://list-manage.com/subscribe.phtml?id=e31cf892ae>).

The article is reprinted below:

“Green” Manufacturing of Biobased Surfactants and Detergents

Dr. Douglas G. Hayes, Associate Professor of Biosystems Engineering, and his research group are investigating the preparation of sugarfatty acid esters, important biobased surfactants prepared from inexpensive and abundant agricultural products: seed oils from corn or soybeans and sugars derived from starches or lignocellulosic biomass. The biobased surfactants are value-added products useful in several foods, cosmetics and pharmaceutical products. Typically, sugar-fatty acid esters are prepared using high temperatures and/or pressures, and require the employment of organic solvents. Hayes' laboratory is preparing the biobased surfactants using a completely “green” approach. A liquid-phase suspension of micron-sized sugar crystals in a mixture of fatty acid reactant plus ester product is contacted with an immobilized lipase, an enzyme designed by nature to form or cleave ester derivatives of fatty acids. The suspension is held at 65 degrees C. No solvent is added, and only a minimal amount of energy is consumed. After about 60% conversion is achieved, a means of removal for the reaction product water is needed to achieve 80-90% conversion. After the reaction is completed, the technicalgrade products is isolated simply and inexpensively by simply removing the immobilized enzyme by filtration or centrifugation. Hayes and co-workers are currently investigating the design of bioreactor systems to enable the scale up of this process.

This endeavor is supported by USDA Grant 2006-34404-17262.

This research is featured in a new book edited by Hayes and others entitled “Biobased Surfactants and Detergents: Synthesis,

Properties, and Applications, to be published by American Oil Chemists' Society Press, Urbana, IL, in May 2009.



Department Head comments continued here...

The entire BESS department appreciates the contribution Lois makes to the department, keeping the faculty aware of their external research spending and tracking both state money and external research accounts. Congratulations Lois, we are looking forward to 25 more! ---Eric



Dean Caula Beyl's comments about Lois at the UTIA awards reception:

Lois celebrates her 25th year with us in 2009. The past seven years, she's been with Biosystems Engineering and Soil Science - where she is an Accounting Specialist II. She previously spent 18 years in Extension's Plant and Soil Science Department.

Co-workers say Lois is an expert bookkeeper, and performs the critical and often difficult task of helping faculty manage their research accounts. She does a great job of educating the educators... on what you can and cannot do regarding UT's fiscal policies.

Lois has been honored with the Outstanding Support Staff Award in the past. She is extremely dedicated, and a true professional.

Now that's the serious stuff. Here's the fun stuff. Lois is known as the departmental prankster. She's especially creative regarding birthdays. Apparently no one escapes Lois on their birthday, especially if its one that ends in a zero.

She is also an avid and expert text messenger, and co-workers say she would give any teenage girl a run for her money in a texting contest. Lois wears her orange with pride. She is a big football and Lady Vols fan, and also enjoys car shows with her husband and son.

Mostly Lois is known for having many, many friends around this campus.

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Mike Buschermohle selected for Lewis Dickson Extension Award



Dr. Mike Buschermohle has been selected as co-recipient, along with Mr. Steve Sutton, to receive The Lewis H. Dickson Extension Award for Innovative Programming for 2009 for their work with the 4-H Electric Camp program. They will be recognized for their accomplishment at the Institute of Agriculture awards/promotion luncheon on August 11.

Electric Camp is a fun-filled, rewarding adventure in electricity held each year at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. Students this year will learn about energy, electricity and basic sciences by participating in the following learning centers: Wiring an Extension Cord, Energy Vampire Slayers, Electric Motors, Robotic Arms, Electric Vehicles, and Electrical Safety. Learning centers are hands-on activity sessions staffed by electric utility professionals that allow 4-H members to learn by doing.

In addition to the learning centers, students will also participate in many other fun-filled activities associated with 4-H Camp. There will be the trip to Dollywood, a swimming and dance party, and yes, a pizza party.

Electric Camp is scheduled for June 23-26 and is for 4-H members who were in the 6th and 7th grade as of as of January 1, 2009 and who have not attended previously. Members do not have to be enrolled in the Electric Project to attend camp.

Electric Camp is made possible through an unique partnership established between UT Extension; the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association and its statewide member cooperatives; the Tennessee Municipal Electric Power Association and its municipal power system members from across the state; TVA; and other industry donors.

Dr. Buschermohle has played a vital role in the success of this program for many years. Congratulations, Mike!

Additional information can be seen on the Tennessee 4-H website <http://4h.tennessee.edu/elecampa/>.

Recent Sponsored Research Awards:

Paul Ayers has received year 2 funding from the U.S. Army for his project *“Vehicle Dynamics Monitoring and Tracking in Support of Land Management”*.

Shawn Hawkins has received funding from Mannco Fertilizer for his project *“Yield and Forage Quality of Tall Fescue Amended with EQ Biosolids, Broiler Litter, and Chemical Fertilizers”*.

STUDENT NEWS

Congratulations Graduates!

**Brian Joseph Chomicki, MS, BsET
Naga Swapna Potteti, MS, BsET
Joshua P. Rowe, MS, BsET**

**Seth Buie Brown, BS ESS, Soil Science
Mitchell Dixon Groothuis, BS BsE (*Summer 2009*)
James Joseph Hartsig, BS ESS, Soil Science
Hulon McCullough Holmes, BS ESS, Environmental and Soil Science
Crystal Marie Dillard Kelley, BS BsE, minor Math, *Magna Cum Laude*
John Philip Kruckeberg, BS BsE, *Summa Cum Laude*
Dustin Bradley Philips, BS ESS, Soil Science
William Keith Rutemeyer, BS BsE, *Magna Cum Laude*
Abdoulaye Samba, BS BsE, *Cum Laude*
Adam William Saul, BS ESS Environmental & Soil Science
Wayne Evans Shanks, BS ESS, Ag Systems Technology
Chase Lee Shaver, BS BsE (*Summer 2009*)
Kenneth Wray Swinson, BS BsE, minor Environmental & Soil Sciences**



Smiles say it all...L- R John Kruckeberg, Abdoulaye Samba, Crystal Kelly, Will Rutemeyer, Chase Shaver, Mitch Groothuis

STUDENT NEWS

Agricultural Leadership Education and Communications

ALEC 102 (Section 001): Interpersonal Leadership Development

Classes begin June 1

Interpersonal leadership is a journey of self-discovery. This course is designed to provide you with an opportunity to explore your personal leadership potential.

Using a variety of self-assessments and reflection, students will identify personal motivators, ethics, values and vision. The class uses the Strength Quest and other leadership assessments to provide a base for personal growth and development.

Leadership development from an individual perspective is highlighted.

Interpersonal competencies are explored.

Note: ALEC 102 (Section 001) is a first session summer course. Students can register for the first session course through Circle Park online @ <http://cpo.utk.edu/CPOWeb/>.

Contact: Dr. Bryan Patterson, Agricultural Leadership Education and Communications

College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources, Phone: (865) 974-3344, patterbq@utk.edu

<http://aee.tennessee.edu>

CASNR NEWS

SUMMER TERM - CALENDAR

Summer Term (Mini, First, Full and Second) 2009

May 6 – 27 Mini-term

May 25 Memorial Day closing, no classes

UT GO opens for mini-term grade submissions (open 7 am to midnight Monday through Saturday; noon to midnight Sunday)

June 1 Summer full term and first session start

UT GO **closes** for mini-term grade submissions; last submission by noon *Undergraduate students*: First day to apply for summer 2009 graduation

June 29 UT GO opens for first session, summer term grade submissions (open 7 am to midnight Monday through Saturday; noon to midnight Sunday)

July 2 Summer first session term ends

July 3 Independence Day closing, no classes

July 6 Summer second session term starts

July 7 UT GO **closes** for first session, summer term grade submissions; last submission by noon

August 1 Department committee assignments due to the Office of the Dean, 125 Morgan Hall

August 4 UT GO opens for second session and full summer term grade submissions (open 7 am to midnight Monday through Saturday; noon to midnight Sunday)

August 6 Summer full term and second session classes end

Undergraduate students: Last day to apply for spring 2010 graduation

August 11 UT GO **closes** for second session and full summer term grade submissions; last submission by noon

August 14 Official summer graduation date (no ceremony)

August 20 Fall semester 2009 classes start

Undergraduate students: First day to apply for fall 2010 graduation

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Solicitation for 2010 Cotton Research and Demonstration Proposals

Cotton Incorporated's Tennessee State Support Committee will meet on Thursday, July 30, 2009 to review progress of current research studies and demonstrations and consider proposals for new projects to fund for 2010. For 2009, 7 projects were funded for a total of \$157,316. Dr. Bob Nichols of Cotton Incorporated indicated that state support funding would be about the same for 2010. Please keep this in mind when preparing your budget request.

The meeting will be in Jackson. Each person with a currently-funded project will be expected to present a progress report (or arrange for a presentation to be made). If appropriate, a tour of plots in the field may be incorporated into the progress report. The general plan is for progress reports and funding proposals for current projects that are to continue to be delivered first followed by proposals for new projects.

If currently-funded projects are scheduled to continue for a second or third year, the progress report will double as a proposal for continued funding in 2010. For projects to be continued, the written progress report prepared for distribution to committee members should indicate at the top of the first page that continuation is requested.

A progress report (two page maximum) must be prepared for each currently-funded research project or demonstration. The suggested outline for progress reports is:

- *(Indicate either continuation is requested for a second or third year or project is terminating)*
- Investigator(s) Name and Contact Information
- Project Title
- Project Objective(s)
- Summary of Progress
- 2009 Budget for continuing projects (place on additional page by itself)
 - Break Down Budget As Follows:
 - Salaries
 - Fringe benefits (as a percent of salaries, usually)
 - Materials and supplies
 - Equipment
 - Travel
 - Other

In addition to proposals for project continuations, the Tennessee State Support Committee requests proposals for new research studies and demonstrations to begin in 2010. The Committee will entertain proposals for projects dealing with any aspect of the cotton production system, market preparation, and/or processing of cotton. Proposals should be no more than three pages. The proposal should be written in lay terms and contain the following information:

1. Principal investigator
2. Institution (University of Tennessee)
3. Department of unit/section
4. Address
5. Telephone and FAX numbers; e-mail address
6. Responsible officer (Dean Brown or Dean Cross)
7. Division (UT AgResearch or UT Extension)
8. Address and telephone number of unit/section
9. Research/demonstration activity proposal title
10. Objectives (brief statement, suggest no more than four lines)
11. Significance
12. Plan of Work

A key point is to clearly explain the research/demonstration activity objectives and give anticipated results and benefits to producers. The budget, on an additional page, should give:

1. Proposed activity title
2. Principal investigator
3. Total budget requested for 2010
4. Period covered (usually January 1 – December 31)
5. Total budget breakdown according to:
 - Salaries
 - Fringe benefits (as a percent of salaries, usually)
 - Materials and supplies
 - Equipment
 - Travel (modest request)
 - Other
6. Signature of person submitting request.

Relating to equipment above, any item valued at more than \$1,000 must be described and justified.

Proposals and progress reports (in 15 copies) should be submitted to the appropriate dean's office (either UT Extension or UT AgResearch) by not later than **July 10, 2009** and should also have completed UTIA-001 and 002 Forms, as appropriate. We will assemble both research and extension proposals into one package and transmit them to the Chairman of the State Support Committee. Each principal investigator will be asked to meet with the Committee on July 30, 2009 and present their proposal. A specific agenda for the proposal presentation meeting will be distributed later.

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Research Program Will Help Subsistence Farmers

The U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Seattle, Washington-based Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), have joined forces to fund and significantly boost research to enhance global small farm/subsistence agriculture in developing countries, according to an NSF news release <http://www.nsf.gov> .

Each organization will provide US\$24 million over five years (US\$48 million total) to support a competitive grants program that will seek answers to pest (insects, weeds, diseases), drought, and related challenges facing small-scale growers and their families who rely on crops for both income and subsistence.

NSF will manage the program, dubbed 'Basic Research to Enable Agricultural Development' (aka "BREAD"), drawing upon a peer review process in consultation with BMGF staff. NSF funds will support research conducted by eligible U.S. academic institutions including non-profit research groups, museums, labs, and professional societies. BMGF funding will support eligible international partners as identified through sub-awards from U.S. awardees.

D. Delmer, newly appointed BREAD program director, views the program as a "unique opportunity to promote international collaborations among scientists from the U.S. and those in developed and developing world countries." The BREAD concept is to expand on previous research efforts to evolve transformative research that will generate sustainable, science-based solutions to smaller-scale agricultural endeavors in targeted areas. -> D. Delmer, NSF, 4201 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22230, USA. bread-wg@nsf.gov . Voice: 1-703-292-8470. --excerpted, with thanks, from the NSF website

(Thanks to Dr. Carl Jones for sharing this with us!)

Sustainable Ag Brainstorming Meeting

One of the more active offshoots of the the Plant Health & Production & Plant Products, Specialty Crops & Organic Ag group --- one of the six TAES Grantsmanship Initiative groups --- has been a strong interest in organic ag. Like most of the other five grantsmanship working groups in the October and subsequent workshop, they have continued to meet to work on grants and discuss future directions.

Dr. Brown asked if the group would be interested in talking about growing their scope beyond organic horticulture, possibly forming a center of some kind in the area of sustainability. Annette Wszelaki, who chairs the organic ag working group, will host a meeting to discuss ideas and gauge interest: Friday, **May 29**, 9:00am in PBB 410. Possibilities include involving wildlife, forage, animal husbandry... anything anyone is interested in from a sustainability point of view.

If you have faculty in your department who might be interested, please forward this email to them. Everyone is welcome. --- *Robert Augé, Professor & Head, Department of Plant Sciences*

FYI: link to the USDA CSREES grant search website is <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/funding.cfm#>

National Security Science and Engineering Faculty Fellowship Competition

Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) expected to be published on Grants.gov in Spring 2009

The Timeline

University "intent to nominate" letters due	12 June 2009
White paper and formal nomination letter deadline	26 June 2009
Notification to semi-finalists (nominal)	21 September 2009
Full proposal and letters of recommendation deadline	16 October 2009
Oral presentations	4-6 December 2009

“Responding to Journal Decisions”

----- Original Message -----

From: Rick Reis [reis@stanford.edu]

Sent: 04/17/2009 09:15 AM MST

To: tomorrows-professor@mailman.stanford.edu

Subject: TP Msg. #939 Responding to Journal Decisions

"Read the review and put it away for several days. What seems shocking and rude on the first day may seem much more manageable by the third day. Getting some distance on the comments is useful for strategizing on how you are going to respond. Once you have done that, make sure you are clear on what decision you have received. You will have to proceed differently depending on whether the journal has rejected your article or asked you to revise and resubmit it."

The posting below offers some great advice on how to respond to decisions about your submissions to research journals. It is by Wendy Laura Belcher, Princeton University from the book *Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing Success*. SAGE Publications, Inc. Copyright ©2009 by Wendy Laura Belcher SAGE Publications, Inc. 2455 Teller Road Thousand Oaks, California 91320. Email: [order@sagepub.com] Reprinted with permission.

Regards,

Rick Reis
reis@stanford.edu

Responding to Journal Decisions

It is time to strategize how you are going to respond to the editor's letter and reviewer's comments on your work. Let's go through this process step by step.

Task 1: Reading the Workbook

On the first day of your writing week, you should read the workbook up to this page and answer all the questions posed in the workbook up to this point.

Task 2: Evaluating and Responding to the Journal Decision

Read the review and put it away for several days. What seems shocking and rude on the first day may seem much more manageable by the third day. Getting some distance on the comments is useful for strategizing on how you are going to respond. Once you have done that, make sure you are clear on what decision you have received. You will have to proceed differently depending on whether the journal has rejected your article or asked you to revise and resubmit it.

Responding to a Journal's Decision to Reject

Let's say that your article gets savaged and rejected. First, remember that almost all scholars have had their work rejected at one point or another -between 85-90 percent of prominent authors admit to having their work rejected (Gans and Shepherd 1994). Second, allow yourself to feel angry and depressed. You are only human!

Third, after allowing yourself to feel down for a week or two, revisit the letter and its recommendations, if there are any. It is time to make a decision about how you are going to proceed. Your options upon rejection are (1) to abandon the article, (2) to send the article without a single change to another journal, (3) to revise the article and send it to another journal, or (4) to protest or appeal the decision and try to resubmit the article to the rejecting journal. Let's go through these choices.

Should I abandon the article?

Studies conducted several decades ago on the publication experiences of those in the physical and social sciences found that one-third of the authors who had an article rejected, abandoned not only the article but also the entire line of research on which it was based (Garvey, Lin, and Tomita 1972). Don't let that be you! If your article is rejected the first time you send it to a journal, you should definitely send it to a second journal. About 85 percent of scholars now send their rejected articles to another journal (Rotton, Foos, Van Meek 1995). If three or more journals have rejected the article, it may be time to think about giving up on it, but remember the story that started this chapter. Further, a political science professor recently told a student of mine that an article of his had been rejected eight times before being published. The main reason to abandon an article is if reviewers raise objections to your methodology, theoretical approach, or argument so serious that you believe, upon long reflection, that they are unsolvable. Another reason is if the peer reviewers regularly agree on what is wrong with the article. Research shows that peer reviewers tend to agree with each other when an article is poor, but then to disagree when an article is strong. In other words, if you are getting split reviews, that's a good sign.

Should I resubmit the article elsewhere without revising it?

Some scholars insist that they never revise an article until it has been rejected by three different journals. As one author put it, "Once it's clear the editor is not interested, I'm not that interested in what the reviewers had to say [because] some reviewer may argue strongly that you change x to y, another may argue equally strongly that you change y to x. Authors should be wary of being drawn into this morass until they find an interested editor. When that happens, then you pay extremely close attention to the reviewers' comments" (Welch 2006). Given the subjectivity of reviewing, this is not a bad plan. In the humanities, such scholars prepare three envelopes, each to different journals, so that if the article comes back from the first or second journal, they can send it right back out that day. If these authors get three rejections, only then do they sit down and really read the reviewers' comments, see whether there is any agreement among them, and then revise accordingly. One study shows that about half of rejected articles that were resubmitted to other journals were not revised (Yankauer 1985). However, and this is important, revising an article increases the chances of a second journal accepting it (Bakanic, McPhail, and Simon 1987).

Should I revise and resubmit the article elsewhere?

Most scholars try to use the recommendations to revise the article each time it is rejected so that they can send an improved article to the next journal. You can't go wrong with this practice, so long as you don't spend too much time on revising and you only respond to critiques with which you agree. You should take care of any factual errors or real mistakes. The purpose of peer review is to provide you with sound recommendations for improving your article; you might as well use them.

Although three-quarters of authors felt that peer reviewers had some recommendations that were based on "whim, bias, or personal preference," about as many authors also felt that the process of peer review improved their articles (Bradley 1981). It seems that authors must live with two contradictory truths: peer review is a subjective, biased process rife with problems AND peer review is a process that definitely improves articles. The editors' review of the reviewers' reports can be particularly helpful in deciding how to proceed.

Should I resubmit my article to a better journal?

Deciding which journal to resend your article to is another important decision. A question students frequently ask me is: Should I send my rejected but revised article to a better journal than the one that rejected it or a worse one?

According to several studies, scholars traditionally send their rejected articles to less prestigious journals. But other studies show that many scholars send their rejected articles to equivalent journals and some send them to better journals. I think it depends on how you feel about your revision. If you got excellent comments the first time around and have substantially strengthened the article without revising it, you may want to pick an equivalent journal, or a lower tiered one.

Your resubmission strategy depends on your initial strategy, as well. Some authors start off by sending the article to a tough, disciplinary journal known for rejecting articles but giving useful reviewers' reports that they can use to improve their article. If this process leads to the article getting into the first, highly-ranked journal, all the better; if it doesn't, such authors feel that the first journal's reviewers' reports are improving their chances of getting into their second choice. Given the subjectivity of reviewing, I'm not sure this is a brilliant strategy. Reviewers at disciplinary journals may ask for the kinds of changes that would not improve your chances at an interdisciplinary journal. As Robert Heinlein said years ago, "don't rewrite unless someone who can buy it tells you to" (Pournelle and Pournelle 1996). If the journal is not going to "buy" it, why revise for them? But there is some evidence for this start-at-the-top strategy: studies suggest that a high percentage of articles rejected by prestigious journals are published elsewhere. For instance, 72 percent of the articles rejected by the American Journal of Public Health were subsequently published in other journals (Koch-Weser and Yankauer 1993).

Other authors start by sending their article to their second-choice journals first and if their article is not accepted there, but they get useful reviewers' reports that lead them to make a strong revision, they then move up the chain and send the improved article to a better journal. (Yes, you are under no obligation to send your work to the journal that led to that improvement. You have not signed any agreement.)

What's the upshot? If you revise and resubmit your article to another journal, you increase your chances of getting published. Several studies suggest that at least 20 percent of published articles were first rejected by another journal. An older study found that about 1 percent of published articles were rejected by four or more journals before being accepted (Garvey, Lin, and Tomita 1972). As the librarian Ann C. Weller concludes in her review of this research, "studies have shown that indeed, a good percentage of rejected manuscripts do become a part of the published literature" (Weller 2001, 70).

Should I protest the decision?

Sometimes, even after allowing yourself time and space, you perceive the reviewers' or editors' comments as cruel, unfair, or outrageous. In these situations, is it worthwhile or effective to complain to the journal editors (the very people who delivered the decision)? On the one hand, everyone has the right to speak truth to power and if you want to exercise that right, go ahead. All editors have received one or two rants from authors about their decisions or their reviewers' reports -yours won't be the first or the last. Just make sure that your protest letter does not commit the same sins that inspired it: Do not be insulting. Since we often lose impartiality in such situations, let someone edit your protest letter before you send it.

On the other hand, the plain truth is that writing such letters won't change anything. Recently, an interviewer asked a well-published faculty member if he ever protested journal decisions. The author answered with one word, "Yes." The interviewer then asked if

protesting ever worked. The author again answered with one word, "No" (Welch 2006, 2). Journal editors are well aware that the process is flawed; thus, they tend to think that the real problem is authors' expectation that it be otherwise:

People have a great many fantasies about peer review, and one of the most powerful is that it is a highly objective, reliable, and consistent process. If I ask people to rank painters like Titian, Tintoretto, Bellini, Carpaccio, and Veronese, I would never expect them to come up with the same order. A scientific study submitted to a medical journal may not be as complex a work as a Tintoretto altarpiece, but it is complex. Inevitably people will take different views on its strengths, weaknesses, and importance. (Smith 2006)

Most importantly, however, is that protesting has very low returns. Writing a protest letter takes up valuable time that you could spend sending your work to another, more receptive journal. Why try to improve the universe and its fairness quotient when you can focus on getting published? Further, if you send a protest to the journal editor, you may feel awkward submitting work to that journal in future, and you don't want to feel awkward submitting work to any journal.

Fortunately, the desire to protest journal decisions tends to wane as you get more experience with submitting articles. You come to understand that plenty of articles are successfully published that have received harsh treatment at the hands of others and you learn to move on. So, if you feel like protesting your first or second journal decision, resist the impulse. You don't know enough yet about how it all works. Get some more experience under your belt.

If it is any comfort, in eleven years as an editor reading reports by reviewers I knew, I began to sense that there was a correlation between niceness and productivity. I can't prove it, but it seemed to me that the kinder and more constructive reviewers were more likely to be productive writers themselves. The harsher and less helpful reviewers were more likely to be unproductive writers. We give others the messages we give ourselves.

Are silence and ineffective protest your only options? No. Another option, if you ever deign to submit work to the journal again, is to mention in your cover letter that you thought you received an "unhelpful" review (use that exact word, not anything stronger) the previous time and would prefer, if possible, to have a different reviewer this time. I'm not sure I recommend this tactic, but some editors will respect this request.

What you definitely should not do is insist that you know who the unkind reviewer was and that that person has a personal vendetta against you. Some authors find it difficult to refrain from trying to guess who the reviewers are. All I can say is that your chances of being right are low. In my years as an editor, I have never had an author guess correctly. And I have seen more than one relationship fail because the author was wrongly convinced about the identity of a negative reviewer. Don't waste time on this game.

Should I appeal the decision?

Some large disciplinary journals have formal appeal processes, with independent boards. Many scholars have recommended over the years that more journals institute better appeal processes and provide authors and reviewers with more chances to dialog -but this sea change does not seem to be coming any time soon (Epstein 1995). A study of author appeals to American Sociological Review found that only 13 percent of appeals were successful (Simon, Bakanic, and McPhail 1986). Your chances of publication are higher, I think, if you move on to another journal.

Should I ask for additional reviewers?

You can sometimes convince an editor who has rejected your article to send it to new reviewers. Only the most dispassionate of appeals, based on evidence not rhetoric, will win the day. For instance, a professor in one of my courses explained how he converted a journal editor's decision to reject an article into a request for a revision. When this author got the editor's negative decision with the reviewers' reports, he wrote to the editor commenting that both reviewers had paid no attention to the content of his article but only to its methodology. The author thought he could solve the methodological problems they identified, so he wrote to the editor and asked, "if I revise the article as the reviewers suggest, would you be able to send it to new reviewers who would comment on the content?" The editor responded that he would do so if the author truly addressed the first reviewers' comments. The professor revised, the editor agreed that the methodological problems had been solved and sent the revision to two new reviewers. They liked the article and it was published. An important key to his author's success was the very professional tone that he maintained throughout, never insulting the reviewers, accepting that their concerns were valid, and being willing to go through a second review process. Persistence was key.

On very rare occasions, editors may change their decision. At our interdisciplinary journal, we once gave a negative decision to an author with whose subject matter we were not familiar and who received one favorable report and one very negative report. The author responded to the negative reviewer's report with an eight-page, single-spaced defense. The tone of the defense was never insulting, but very focused, providing a swath of data to disprove the reviewer's objections and laying out how the author's and the reviewer's differences reflected a much larger debate going on in the field. The author insisted that the reviewer had not given the article a fair hearing. Since we liked controversial work and found the defense convincing, we asked the author to include much of that defense in the article itself and we published it. So, although protests can't carry the day, professional responses directly addressing the reviewers' critiques sometimes can.

Of course, I don't recommend that you spend time writing eight-page defenses, especially to journals that have sent unkind or unhelpful remarks. If you receive a definitive rejection, it is best to move on to the next journal.

EXTENSION NEWS

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SRA Grant Announcement

Denise Tennessee, Agriculture Program Coordinator for R4 EPA just sent this announcement. The deadline isn't far off, but this may be a good opportunity for someone in our program.

Under the SRA Grant Program, EPA will provide grants and cooperative agreements to fund pollution prevention (source reduction and resource conservation) activities. EPA is interested in funding projects that assist in reducing hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants entering waste streams or otherwise released into the environment (including fugitive emissions) **prior** to recycling, treatment, disposal or energy recovery activities. This grant is associated with the EPA Pollution Prevention Program. **The deadline is May 26, 2009.**

<http://www.epa.gov/p2/pubs/grants/srap09.htm> --Frank Henning/Region IV EPA - Land Grant Universities Liaison
313 Hoke Smith Building, Athens, GA 30602, Phone: (706) 542-8868, Fax: (706) 583-0183

FYI: link to the USDA CSREES grant search website is <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/funding.cfm#>

Solicitation for 2010 Cotton Research and Demonstration Proposals – More info [click here](#)

UTIA NEWS

The University Libraries is undertaking faculty, undergraduate, and graduate student focus groups in June to assist us in improving our Libraries' main web page before the opening of fall semester. We really do NEED your input! There will be refreshments and a lively discussion.

What: Faculty Focus Group
Date: Thursday, June 18
Time: 3:00 - 4:30 pm
Place: Hodges Library, room to be announced

The objectives of this session are to:

- Understand for what tasks patrons most use or want to use the UT Libraries' website
- Discuss likes and dislikes regarding the design of library websites
- Determine what information sources users want to search from the homepage and what terminology should be used to label those information sources

If you can participate, please let our assessment analyst, Debbie Valine, know as soon as possible. Contact Debbie via email (dvaline@utk.edu) or telephone: 974-4936. Once you confirm your attendance, Debbie will let you know the room assignment. If you cannot attend, please share this invitation with other colleagues who might be interested in participating.

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