

LEVENSPIEL DEFENDS HIS POSITION

To The Editor:

A while back (Summer 1988 issue), I wrote a letter to this column which pointed out the wide difference in the cost of two for-profit mainline chemical engineering journals, *CEC* and *CES*. In your last issue (Winter 1989) Mr. Gordon, chairman of Gordon and Breach, publishers of *CEC*, in a long letter said that my analysis was "incorrect in just about every respect imaginable." I am sorry to have to return to this matter but I am impelled to do so because I do not think that I am wrong and I believe that the facts support my concerns. I have a few brief comments in response to Mr. Gordon's letter.

1. Of course Mr. Gordon's figures and mine are completely different. He quotes 1988 prices but my comparison was not for 1988! In my letter I clearly stated that I was comparing December 1987 figures which were the only ones available when I wrote the letter. The numbers given by Mr. Gordon are not pertinent and are not correct for the period referred to in my letter.

2. Only one of the numbers in my comparison of journals may be in question, and that is the cost for the December 1987 issue of *CES*. Since journals are bought by the volume, and

since \$435.00 was the price of the 1987 volume, including the December issue, this was the figure I used in my calculations. *CES* did raise its advertised price during the year to \$500/volume, but that would not affect the buyer of the 1987 volume. I think that \$435 is the correct figure to use, however even if one takes the higher figure this would mean the *CEC* would cost about 10 times as much as *CES*, instead of 11 times. Whether 10 or 11, the point of my letter remains unchanged in that the pricing of technical journals is inexplicable.

3. Mr. Gordon brings up a number of other matters...the color plates in *CEC*, my alleged connection to *CES*, the volumes of *CEC* which contain as many as 1000 pages, etc. Regular readers of *CEC* may be as puzzled as I am about the above statements.

4. Finally, on a more general note: it is evident that the forces of the marketplace do not apply when it comes to the pricing of technical journals. In the long run this is harmful to our profession and this concerns me. The first step in redressing this situation is to know the facts. Therefore, I would like to propose that *CEE* make and publish a survey every now and then of the costs of the mainline chemical engineering journals. I think that this would be worthwhile since it would be most enlightening and helpful to us consumers.

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