



It's Show Time, Young Engineers

by Ir. Choo Kok Beng, FASc

*"The **error of youth** is to believe that intelligence is a substitute for experience, while the **error of age** is to believe experience is a substitute for intelligence."*

– Ernest Hemingway

THE error of IEM is to ignore this piece of wisdom from Ernest Hemingway.

Before the older engineers begin to think that they are "over the hill" and before the young think that they are "inexperienced", let me explain.

For as long as I can remember, young engineers in IEM (including the now seasoned, professional engineers who were young once!) have always displayed exceptional leadership qualities with passion and exuberance that are contagious and unmistakable. They have proven to be the *crème de la crème* among other young engineers within the Young Engineers ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organisations (YEAFFEO).

They have redefined IEM's expectations of them and they have done so well that they are now in a class of their own.

It's not just my opinion. The events that the Young Engineers Section has spearheaded speak for themselves – IEM YES National Summit, YEAFFEO, Mt. Kinabalu Malaysian Book of Records attempt and others.

Sadly, all these could come to an end.

Why? Because YES is open only to members who have not passed their professional interview or professional

assessment examination. Once they pass, they will become Corporate Members of IEM. At a little over the age of 30 or even younger, many will feel too overwhelmed and intimidated by more seasoned Corporate Members to stand for positions to serve the IEM.

This flaw in the system is an anti-climax to the incredible success the YES is building. As a result, the once-active YES members who are now Corporate Members will no longer to be active and it is a matter of time that we may lose their once invaluable contributions.

If this problem is not fixed, IEM will lose a pool of the brightest and largest group of engineers who can serve IEM and be its future leaders.

Perhaps age should be the qualifying mark for YES membership instead of grade. Those below the age of 40 should be allowed to remain in YES regardless of their corporate status. By the time they reach the age of 40, they would surely be confident and seasoned enough to join the other Corporate Members in the mainstream activities of IEM.

Less than 10% out of the 66 IEM Council members are below the age of 40. This is a very alarming situation and does not represent a healthy demography considering that a huge percentage of IEM engineers are below age 40.

Let's work towards this to benefit both young and old. The old needs the energy of the young, and the young needs the wisdom of the old.

It's show time, young engineers. ■



Engineering Invention and Innovation Exhibition (EINIX) 2012



Mt. Kinabalu Malaysian Book of Record Attempt



YEAFFEO 2012



IEM YES National Summit 2013



IEM YES Gala Dinner 2013



YEAFFEO 2012