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Coasting Along Faster and Better

by **Engr. Dr Yeoh Hak Koon**, Grad. IEM

MOST readers of JURUTERA will probably not notice any change of guard in the Editorial Board. If you did, hopefully it is because of the positive changes rather than the feared opposite. During this transition period, the Secretariat has been shouldering greater burdens to make things happen, while yours truly learns to swim or sink. Still, to set the accountability straight, the merits belong to the Secretariat, the flaws remain mine.

I am mindful of the number of pairs of scrutinising eyes. I also notice a fire, possibly flamed by the transition period. We are not planning ahead sufficiently: though we have themes of the Bulletin all the way to March 2010, the contents are not set early enough. Just imagine working to fill up the July issue in mid June! Yet ironically, I was shown a list of pending articles, a few dating back to 2007. Something must be done quickly.

First, the long overdue articles are being vetted and will be scheduled for publication. It seems that there was uncertainty as to who should first receive a particular submission. Thus I have clarified to the Secretariat that all reports and opinions will be first edited by the publisher before they are returned to me. Letters come straight to me. Technical articles will also come to me, to be re-routed to suitable Technical Divisions for advice if the articles are 'warm or cold'. Only after that I can work on the revision process and publication scheduling.

Clearly this involves pushing documents between many parties, so it must be done efficiently and early enough. Alternatively, we could claim that since the articles are not peer-reviewed, the Bulletin Editor alone should decide their fate. This is a slippery slope that I hesitate to climb as a norm.

Second, together with the Secretariat, we will start soliciting editorials and articles for future editions, preferably four but at least two months ahead. To supply a minimum of 29 pages of IEM materials monthly is not easy, furthermore, the whole layout must be finalised by the 18th of the preceding month. Our contractual obligations to the publisher should not be taken lightly, deadlines must be met.

While this 'fire' is being doused, I plan to introduce some changes, after benchmarking similar publications and consulting members of the Editorial Board. As readers, you may write in on this. The ultimate challenge for us is that you will notice if JURUTERA did not reach your mailbox, because you have been looking forward to read it! ■