

A message from the new TLE chairman—Technical diversity works

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First of all, I would like to thank all my predecessors and former *TLE* Editorial Board members for making *TLE* one of the most-recognized geotechnical journals in the world. Their hard work, volunteerism, and vision have resulted in a journal that is widely read and preserved by majority of our membership, which is unprecedented.

Our profession and the energy business are truly global. Boundaries and barriers that used to exist have faded and have been replaced with a seamless language that is dynamic and fluid. In our business, it is wise to be technically diverse. This diversity comes in different forms. For service companies, diversity may mean several things like offering a full suite of geophysical services so that they don't rely on a few products to survive or it may mean having a diverse workforce from different countries and cultures to facilitate expansion of their international business. For each of us individually, technical diversity may mean expanding our knowledge base to include various geophysical skills. As we broaden our skills, we also improve our stability and develop room for growth. The builders of Egyptian and Latin American pyramids knew what they were building more than a thousand years ago. By constructing broad base foundations, they built sound and solid structures.

SEG and our profession have grown over the years since I first joined in 1979. Fortunately, our respective growths were well managed. We grew wide first, and then up. For example, looking back at a copy of a 1979 *GEOPHYSICS*, technical papers were usually classified under a half-dozen topics—i.e., seismic, gravity and magnetics, electromagnetic, well logging, geothermal, and others. The list of editors was very short too; there was one editor and 10 associate editors—a total of 11. A recent 2003 issue of *GEOPHYSICS* shows one editor, four assistant editors, 13 special editors, and 49 associate and department editors—a total of 67. The reason is obvious; geophysical technologies evolved into various subcategories and specialties that required more specialized experts to properly review submitted technical papers. As geophysics became more complex, SEG responded appropriately to meet this challenge by adding more editors with diversified experiences.

At first glance, the current *TLE* Editorial Board appears to be exclusively petroleum-based, and that the academia, mining, and near-surface geophysics groups are not represented. In reality, the board's background and technical expertise are quite diverse. As a result of our dynamic profession, some board members (in common with many of their colleagues) have changed employers in the last few years. For example, Ali Tura, Gerard Herman, and myself were previously with 4th Wave Imaging, University of Delft, and Consol Energy R&D (a coal mining company), respectively, when we first joined the board. Even though our current employers are petroleum-based companies, the academia, mining, and near-surface groups are represented through our past affiliations. Therefore, the board has enough expertise to solicit and review papers from the wide spectrum of geophysical technologies that have applications in the petroleum, mining, engineering, and environmental challenges.

Also striking about the board's makeup is diversity among the country of origin: John Eastwood (Canada), Lawrence Gochioco (Philippines), Gerard Herman

(Netherlands), Ali Tura (Turkey), and the rest from the United States. Whichever way you look at or cut it, the editors of *GEOPHYSICS* and *TLE* are as diversified as you can imagine.

With nearly half of its 19 000 members living outside the United States (in more than 100 different countries), SEG has a daunting task to reach the four corners of the world. I am glad to report that it has succeeded. For example, my first exposure to SEG was by accident. In 1979, I was a graduate student in physics at the Ateneo de Manila University (a Jesuit institution). Funding for scientific research projects in the Philippines was scarce. As such, I applied to at least a dozen U.S. institutions seeking financial support. SEG was the only institution that replied and enclosed a \$750 check. It was amazing at that time because the 1970s was a decade of high inflation. In addition, it was also the period when the world experienced two major oil crises. When I received a full graduate scholarship from the physics department of Ohio University in 1980, I took additional geology and geophysics courses on top of my regular physics load because I was already charting my future career in geophysics. The rest is history.

Therefore, SEG's drive to expand international and domestic student membership is the right path. The seeds we sow today will someday pay off many times over. I truly believe that some recipients of past and current SEG student scholarships will become major contributors to our profession, and later become editors as well.

Let us not forget that while the editors of *GEOPHYSICS* grew nearly sixfold in the last 24 years, the SEG staff in Tulsa, OK, grew from 31 to 46 today—only about 50%. That means that the staff has been working hard, even harder than us at times, to meet the growing demands and diverse requirements of our society. For example, Dean Clark and Dolores Proubasta have been the pillars of stability and growth for *TLE* since its inception. In addition to their editorial responsibilities, they have to interact with seven board members on a daily basis. There are many others in the business office working above and beyond their assigned tasks. Therefore, let us show our appreciation of their hard work and sacrifices by thanking them at SEG meetings and functions.

Companies, organizations, and individuals who fail to adopt technical diverse products, workforce, skills, ideas, etc. will find it harder to compete in this highly competitive technology-driven environment. Diversity may come in different forms and exploring ways or means to add them to your portfolio will certainly help. Why? Because it works!

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