

One Little Step for an Engineer

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Without a doubt there was a lot of energy at the AIMBE meeting this year. But, there always is. Now that we are all back home and in our normal comfortable environments, whatever passion we had for the commonweal has cooled and we are back in our own little worlds. But, it always happens that way. If only we in AIMBE could sustain our drive on behalf of medical and biological engineering (MBE), how much more AIMBE could do, and how much stronger our influence would be. But, that does not appear to be the natural order of things.

There was, however, something new at this meeting. Jonathan Moreno mentioned something about getting involved at a very personal level, about the dearth of real science and engineering expertise in organizations such as the think tanks of the Washington, D.C. area. He explained how these organizations write papers, give advice, and guide public policy related to science and engineering without themselves being constrained by real expertise in these subjects. Then he casually mentioned that we in the audience would all be very welcome to submit our CVs to organizations of our choice—be they on the political right, left, or in between—and act as consultants on science and engineering issues.

This idea has appeal. For many of the gray-haired folk listening to him, their careers are at the stage where they could seriously consider such a move. Their research, teaching, administrative efforts, and professional lives have come to the point where there is not a lot more to be proven. Experience and expertise have amassed to the point where

they clearly form the major portion of their ongoing professional contributions.

Wouldn't it be great to use these skills and judgments where they are in short supply?

For those of us who heard Dr. Moreno, the message he delivered had a lot of appeal; I heard a number of conversations where the idea of joining some of these organizations was being seriously discussed. For those of you who weren't there, perhaps it is time for you, too, to make a modest change in direction of your professional life.

But, now the AIMBE Annual Event is over; we are all back in our comfortable familiar environments. There is no sense acting upon feelings that were aroused at AIMBE, because the world of mundane issues has closed in again. Excitement, inspiration, and passion have again been pushed aside, to remain in the background until the next AIMBE meeting next year.

But wouldn't it have been fun for us, and great for AIMBE, if we had just taken that next step.