



NSECAL NEWS

A Publication of the Nigerian Society of Engineers, Calabar Branch

NSE CALABAR VISITS COMMISSIONER OF LANDS, CONDUCTS TECHNICAL VISITS

To start off the 2011 Branch year, the NSE executive paid courtesy calls on several of our senior engineers, including the Honourable Commissioner of Lands, Engr. Bassey I. Oqua, FNSE, who was a one-time chairman of the branch. The visit was also to familiarise and update the Commissioner on the branch's activities towards hosting the 2011 AGM, and to solicit his advice and full support.

Also as part of our renewed vigour to improve our participation in the Group Dynamics competition, the branch undertook a technical visit to the jetty construction site in Calabar Free Trade Zone. Even though we had been there last year, additional progress in works made it necessary for us to revisit the project.

The branch is scheduled to visit Ibom Power plant in Ikot Abasi, and the Mono Rail Project in Port Harcourt.

Below are pictures of these recent activities.



COURTESY CALL



TECHNICAL VISIT

From the Editor's Desk



Fellow Engineers, welcome to the first edition of our newsletter for the year 2011.

Finally, this quarterly branch newsletter is now available on our website, www.nsecalabar.org, which has been updated, and is still being developed. You can now read it directly, or save it as a pdf download and read at your leisure! While you enjoy the newsletter, remember you can be part of it by sending your articles, and by informing us of your birthday, wedding or social activity you have done or intend to do. Try the IQ tests on our leisure page, just to see how well you can do.

This June promises a lot of activity as both the National President of NSE, Engr. Ajibola, and the entire members of the Central Planning Committee, will be visiting Calabar. There will be courtesy calls on the Governor and other dignitaries, as well as interaction with members of the branch. Keep in touch so as to be part of these activities.

Remember to support the branch to grow by paying your dues, and attending branch meetings and activities; it enhances your growth too.
Happy reading!

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This newsletter is now available by download at our website:

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Contributions are welcome.

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IMPROVED UTILITIES, IMPROVED ENGINEERS

For some time now, in fact, for some months now I have been quietly amazed at the state of electricity in my area. Don't know about you, but I have enjoyed a tremendous increase in the amount of time I actually use public electricity. My apologies to the authorities, but I am one of those who still refer to public electricity as 'NEPA', which used to mean many things to many people, but personally use to interpret as *Never Expect Power At all!* Not anymore, my brother; NEPA have not only turned a new leaf, they have bought a new book!

I mean my weekly consumption of diesel and petrol has drastically reduced because I do not run my generators like I used to. What is the reason? Well, I have deliberately remained ignorant, dwelling and enjoying in the knowledge that what you don't know cannot hurt you. All I know is that electricity is so regular now that sometimes my wife has to turn off the freezer to allow things defrost because they are frozen solid, I now watch the news without apprehension, and I now put on that unused air conditioner I bought last year.

And what happened to the long queues at petrol stations? They have disappeared along with the fluctuating pump price. I actually walk into a petrol station with a jerry can and buy petrol without showing special task force permit, giving bribes, issuing threats or pleading with some obnoxious attendant. What happened? I have also deliberately remained ignorant; all I know is that petrol is so regular now that lovely female attendants actually beg me to buy from their pumps when I drive into a station.

The situation is not perfect yet; kerosene and diesel are still expensive, while some areas of the nation are not fully enjoying this electricity renaissance. Indeed there is a lot more required of the state of our national infrastructures, but we are sometimes told to be thankful for small mercies, so I want to commend these two for now, because both were in far worse states this same time last year.

Seriously, why are there improvements? What is making them work? A lot of cynics have brushed them off as election gimmicks, improvements designed to sway voters into thinking that these services will be continuously improved if the present leadership is retained to continue for another four years. The cynics claim that once voted in, things will return to the moribund condition they used to be in. Maybe true, maybe not, but the fact as far as I am concerned is, whatever politics or voodoo the leadership are using to make these things works is bloody good, and probably should be packaged for export to other African countries!

From the marbled corridors of power in Abuja, to the beer parlours in Ibadan, to the classrooms in Calabar, to the officer's mess in Enugu, everybody blames 'government' while complaining about the poor state of our public utilities. But a lot of us conveniently forget that the CEO, GM, Director, Permanent Secretary, Commissioner, and not so long ago, even the President, is an engineer! And we are in charge of a lot of government agencies responsible for public utilities.

So what are the challenges to engineers? Obviously a lot. Particularly for those working in public utilities and parastatals, and those involved with formulating and implementing policy governing these infrastructures. If the present government is using either high threats or high inducements, it means that the engineers involved are now doing what they were not previously doing, or vice versa. Either way, we are responsible and deeply involved. I accept that the actual situations are not so simplistic, but engineers always start from the basics don't we? I put up my hand as an engineer, and accept that there are a lot of improvements we can make to this state, and this country.

It all starts from me and from you. Are you willing to improve?

BRANCH NEWS & ACTIVITIES

INDUSTRIAL VISITS:

The branch conducted visit to jetty construction project in Calabar Free Trade Zone premises on 24th of March 2011. Members were conducted through various aspects and stages of construction.

BRANCH GENERAL MEETINGS:

The branch held its General meeting for February on the 16th at the CRS Min of Works premises.

The branch held its General meeting for March on the 17th at Federal Secretariat Complex.

All minutes of general meetings are available for download from the new website, or can be picked up from the branch office.

INAUGURATION OF AGM 2011 LOC

In line with requirements of our hosting the 2011 AGM, the Calabar branch has formed a 40-plus member Local Organising Committee. This committee, which was formally inaugurated on the 8th of March 2011 by the branch Chairman, is headed by the immediate past chairman of the branch Engr. M. T. E. Essien. The LOC has swung into action with the formation of several key sub-committees and has been holding series of meetings and interactions with relevant individuals and corporate bodies. Because the challenges of hosting the AGM are tremendous, volunteers are very welcome for membership into various sub-committees.

COURTESY CALLS:

So far, the branch executive has paid courtesy calls on the Honourable Commissioner of Lands, Engr. B. I. Oqua, and the Managing Director of Cross River Water Board Limited, Engr. E. B. Etowa. These visits are to honour some of our members, who are in top management positions, and to sensitize and solicit their support for our branch activities, amongst which is the up-coming Annual General Meeting which we are hosting.



Industrial Visit to Jetty



Courtesy Call on Hon Commissioner

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER (APRIL –JUNE 2011)

Exco meeting	NSE Office	21 st April
General meeting	(PHCN Transmission Ekorinim)	27 th April
Exco meeting	NSE Office	19 th May
General meeting	(CFTZ Conference room, CFTZ Complex)	25 th May
Technical visit	Ibom Power Plant, Ikot Abasi	26 th May
Exco meeting	NSE Office	16 th June
General meeting	(PHCN Business Office)	22 nd June
Technical visit	Monorail Project Port Harcourt	June



IQ Check:

Check out this brain teaser, it is an old Biology puzzle. See whether you can answer it correctly. The answer is at the bottom of the next page, but don't cheat! Remember, it is more satisfying doing it yourself.

The Problem:

A Petri dish hosts a healthy colony of bacteria. Once a minute every bacterium divides into two. The colony was founded by a single cell at noon. At exactly 12:43 (43 minutes later) the Petri dish was half full.

At what time will the dish be full?

Jokes:

They were leading a priest, a drunkard and an engineer to the guillotine. They asked the priest if he wanted to face up or down when he meets his fate. The priest said that he would like to face up so that he will be looking toward heaven he dies. They raise the blade of the guillotine, release it, it comes speeding down and suddenly stops just inches from his throat. The authorities take this as divine intervention and release the priest.

Next the drunkard comes to the guillotine. He also decides to die face up hoping that he will be as fortunate as the priest. They raise the blade of the guillotine, release it, it comes speeding own and suddenly stops just inches from his throat. So they release the drunkard as well.

The engineer is next. He too, decides to die facing up. They slowly raise the blade of the guillotine, when suddenly the engineer says, "Hey, I think the problem is that the cable is binding right here..."

.....

A man visiting a cemetery heard a second man who was kneeling at a nearby grave crying-out loudly, "Why did you have to die?!?!? Why did you have to die?!?!?".

The first man was so moved by the other man's obvious pain, that he walked over and lightly placed a comforting hand on the distraught man's shoulder and asked him, "Is this your wife?". "No", replied the weeping man, "Her first husband!"

Kids Are Quick!

Teacher: Millie, give me a sentence starting with 'I.'

Millie: I is..

Teacher: No, Millie..... Always say, 'I am.'

Millie: All right... 'I am the ninth letter of the alphabet.'

TEACHER: Essien, your composition on 'My Dog' is exactly the same as your brother's. Did you copy his?

ESSIEN: No, sir. It's the same dog.

TEACHER: Ukpo, what do you call a person who keeps on talking when people are no longer interested?

UKPO: A teacher

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MY FIRST INTERVIEW

My name is Monjok Basse and I am a chemical engineer who currently works in Port Harcourt with an oil service company. I want to tell you a story about my first real interview. I had attended three interviews before, but they were really situations where I was asked to present copies of my credentials, and off-handedly asked a few personal questions. This was different, I had answered a newspaper advert, got a reply to sit for an aptitude test, took the test, and was actually invited for an interview. This is my story: I arrived an hour earlier than the nine o'clock stipulated on my letter. The company I was interviewing for was a popular petrochemical firm that produced various products, and they were looking for chemical engineers to work in their plants. After showing my letter at the gate, I was escorted to an air-conditioned waiting hall to wait. Within twenty to thirty minutes, the hall had filled up with some fifteen or so others who had come for the interview. There were mostly guys, mostly dressed in suits, and four ladies who as if planned, were all wearing smart skirt suits. I had my put on my Sunday best, complete with my paisley silk tie, with my starched cuff-sleeve shirt to match. As nervousness gave way to eagerness, I found myself exchanging banter with the others, while we waited for nine o'clock. Time seemed to stand still as we waited and waited. Finally, at ten o'clock, a stern-looking lady came in and called out names from a clipboard, while we each answered our names. After calling our names, twenty in all, she told us to wait for further instructions. As soon as she left, the banter resumed, and by now, we had a comedian amongst us, who amused us by mimicking the stern lady. There also were two fellows who spent the entire time arguing about current affairs, proving who was more current. I guess they were trying to impress each other as well as the four ladies, who surprisingly were more beautiful than any female I had ever seen in my engineering faculty in school! By eleven o'clock, nothing, and somebody suggested we look for a place to eat. But at the risk of missing our interview, none of us agreed, so we continued to wait. Finally, shortly before noon, the stern lady returned with a portly man, and we were all ushered to the restaurant, and seated to a well set dining table. For each of us they had placed an impressive-looking cutlery set, plates and napkins. As the smell of food wafted around us and *Pavlovian* instincts began to take over, we were each given a small menu to make our orders. It was a simple two-course meal; main dish and dessert. Main dishes were divided into Continental or African, which in the case of continental was a choice of spaghetti or rice both with sauce, while in the case of African was a choice of garri with okro or egusi soup. Dessert was straightforward; a choice of ice cream or cream cake. As the worms began to sing in my stomach, I knew the best thing for me was what we used to call in school 'firm foundation' which meant garri and any soup. The first three guys on my left had ordered garri and okro soup,

and I did not hesitate in ordering the same, as did most of the guys. Unsurprisingly, all four ladies ordered rice and sauce. *'Na so dem bin dey pose for school too'*, I thought. As our piping hot dishes were placed before us, I remembered the dread that passed through me when I remembered that the last time I actually used a fork and knife to eat was back in secondary school; throughout my university days, it had been my bare fingers for anything swallow (garri, pounded yam, etc., and fork or spoon for anything else. As it slowly dawned on me that this lunch was part of the interview, I looked over at the other guys; out of the twelve of us that ordered garri, ten had ordered it with okro soup! There is an old motor park saying that goes: *Okro na de king of all soup, if you no gree bow to am, e go show you why*. Anyway, I picked up my fork and knife and went to battle. Well, at the end of the day, I escaped with just one stain on my tie, which was a lot better than some of the guys! The second mistake I made was in choosing ice cream for dessert, because in my nervousness, I spilt some on my lap and had to borrow a napkin to wipe it off. So there I was, in a very impressive suit, with an okro stain on my paisley tie and a wet spot on my crotch, ready to interview for the position of chemical engineering in a large multinational firm. I was eventually called in to appear before the interview panel, and was asked a lot of questions. I remember I answered them correctly and in the manner my elder cousins and uncles had coached me, but sometimes I wish I could have answered them as honestly as I really felt. The three questions I particularly remember were: Do you have any previous experience in this field? Do you possess any additional qualifications other than your first degree? If we employed you what would you want as your salary?

Why do employers and interviewers ask these stupid questions? If I could answer them again, my answers would have been something like this:

How would I have any experience? I am barely four months from passing out of NYSC!

Any additional qualifications? Outside my primary and secondary school certificates, I have a testimonial for attempting JAMB four times, and a certificate from my fraternity in school...

What would I want as salary? Is ₦1 million a month too small? I have junior ones to educate, aged parents to take care of, house rent to pay, car to buy, and a pregnant girlfriend to marry...

I eventually finished with the interviewers and went home. I was not employed that day by the company, but as the saying goes, as one door closes, another opens, and I did get employed by another company. The funny thing was that I did get to work with that firm later on in my career, eventually leaving them for where I am presently. One of the things I did take from that experience is: you should never go for an interview hungry, never let old skills like eating with cutlery die, and avoid okro soup on very important days. Oh yeah, one more thing I took from that day...I eventually married that lady that lent me her napkin.

Answer to IQ Check:

The dish will be full at 12:44.

TO SHREWD ENTREPRENEURS: A NEW ERA OF THE SOCIAL ENGINEERING

An article submitted by Engr Solomon I Agboje

A central animating precept of capitalist market theory and a near-religious tenet of the economics of western society hold that in the course of an investment enterprise, every fiscal period ought to be better than the one before it. Every shrewd entrepreneur knows this. But nothing in the vast archive of human knowledge has ever supported the notion that perpetual economic sunshine is in anyway realistic or attainable. It is not even certain that endless prosperity would be desirable, yet this dream of an impracticable ecstasy of eternal earning exerts a stranglehold on the thought and psyche of shrewd capitalist entrepreneurs, and stands out as the philosophy that drives business ventures the world over.

When the basic principles of wealth creation through entrepreneurship are subjected to the brute of some form of critical examination, greed and ambition are revealed. All what shrewd capitalist entrepreneurs seek out of life is wealth security: a big bank account, pockets of investments littered everywhere in the world, fleets of posh cars, private jets, flamboyant houses and lifestyles of elegance and affluence. And indeed, a lot of entrepreneurs know how to achieve these.

Rather than leading or living life, they calculate it, adding or subtracting and investing desperately. Like a Dell computer or a Blackberry, they are full of facts and figures. They know a good deal about investment theories and management principles, but very little about human beings. To maximize profits, or profiteer out-rightly, they resort to classical economic theories, treating fellow humans like pieces of machinery and tools. They reduce every human value to monetary terms. And like chemists, shrewd capitalist investors try to fit life into a formula. They attempt to seize control of all market forces, and have no tolerance for people. They are determined to make more money even if it takes human lives including theirs. Labour exploitation and environmental degradation mean nothing to them. An enterprising investment is their only interest in life, seeking to constantly expand the frontiers of their wealth and always ready to play dirty to get that extra naira. They foist on the consuming public products and stuff that are not really needed, just to get that extra naira; and spend all their lives dreaming of money-induced happiness.

But what volume of wealth really brings true happiness? At what point are human needs and wants satiable?

Indeed, a whole lot of shrewd capitalist entrepreneurs attain almost all the wealth dreamed of: cars, luxury homes, huge investments, exquisite gadgets, membership of exclusive clubs, political clout, etc. They seek status and constantly search for emblems of eminence. They use tokens of power, socioeconomic connections and political might to prove to themselves that they have really made it. They ride in chauffeured limousines and fly first class. They wear two hundred and fifty thousand naira suits, furnish their bathrooms with gold faucets and live in glass houses. They have all the money and assets in the world but no true friend. Not even one! Their employees hate them. They lord it over employees and talk only with VIPs. Old acquaintances are dropped and new ones cultivated, according to current socioeconomic and political standing.

But do these really bring them self actualization and happiness? Not really!

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TO SHREWD ENTREPRENEURS: A NEW ERA OF THE SOCIAL ENGINEERING

An article submitted by Engr Solomon I Agboje

(Continued from page 6)

Despite all their worldly success, they are still insecure and afraid of failure. Elegant as they may seem, their self-esteem and ambitions dangle. They live as though there were no other goals, no dreams, no passions.

Until the tail end of their lives, they may not come close to identifying the point of satiation of wealth; neither will they come close to realizing that the amassment of wealth (that may never be used) and the attainment of happiness (of rest-of-mind) are two different things. At this end-point, a whole lot of shrewd investment entrepreneurs can be easily seen to be miserable, overworked and worn out. They are pressed by time, burdened by taxes and tormented by failing health, headaches and doubts. They climb the ladder of success only to find that it leads to nowhere – except to more climbing.

Then come panic, fits of depression and problems of old age. Saddened by the burden of succession planning, at the pinnacle of prominence, they get bent, old, sick and spent. They find themselves in a sorry state and get to realize the simplicity and ephemerality of life only too late.

Disillusioned, they realize belatedly how very little they had lived. With these burden of challenges comes the adversity they had feared the most. Their investment enterprise suffers economic adversity as a result of poor succession and management planning. In the face of this economic recession, most of them have no thoughts of their own. They demonstrate behaviours similar to those of drowning masses, running from theories to theories, and principles to principles, seeking evasive solutions. They speak Smith in the morning, Taylor in the afternoon and Maslow at night.

Fortunately, in the face of final despair, a whole lot of men, who in their working lives had been shrewd entrepreneurs, become wiser. Not proud of the fact that their names had become synonymous with adjectives connoting strict dictatorial leadership styles and actions in controlling, subjugating and exploiting people, they begin to spare a thought for the world in its holistic and transcendental form. As they learn to do this, they become less clever and more human, succumbing to the realization that they had all the while lived in a planet created by a power whose attributes and might dwarfs all market forces, defy economic theories and control scientific laws. They begin to apply themselves to the service of causes greater than self interest. They champion initiatives to plough back to the society a fraction of what they had taken from it. Their vocabulary widens. They learn the true meaning of the words: charity, humanitarianism, philanthropy, benevolence, aids and brotherhood.

At this juncture, their understanding of the ‘real world’ takes a great leap forward; historical change is no longer seen as a consequence of class struggle between the ‘bourgeoisies and the proletariats’. Class distinction is relegated to the dark recesses of absurd history. This transformation gives rise to a new era of social engineering.

A CLOSE LOOK AT ADIABO BRIDGE

Most visitors to Calabar are probably familiar with the Tinapa Business and Leisure Resort. Tinapa is only accessible by turning off the main highway into Calabar and going through the Calabar – Tinapa – Adiabo road. The road meanders through the scenic grassy hills of the rubber estate before you turn left at the first roundabout. Next time you visit, go past the roundabout, and take a drive straight and all the way to Adiabo, and to the Calabar River. You will be greeted by a spankily good-looking bridge. And if you drive across this bridge admiring the beautiful sights and sounds, you finally come to an abrupt disappointing end, because the road goes no further. Welcome to Adiabo Bridge.

Originally conceived in 1996 as part of the Calabar – Ikoneto new road project by the late General Abacha administration, Adiabo Bridge was built and completed by Setraco Nig Ltd in 1998. Some 600 metres in length, this bridge is a simple deck-on-beam structure which is founded on large diameter bored piles. The original road was designed to link Calabar, Abiabo, Creek Town and Ikoneto, with a connecting road from Creek Town to Okurikang junction to meet the Calabar – Itu highway. The road would have to traverse swamps and rivers and was to comprise five reinforced bridges with very deep piles. However, a toxic combination of delayed funds, bureaucracy, poor management, and death of key personnel culminated in the project being stalled in 2002, and it has remained this way ever since.

The benefits of the completion of this project are multiple, but a few are:

- As an alternative route from Calabar, it has high impact to Security and Tourism.
- As a link to Ikoneto/Creek Town areas, which have high Agricultural value.
- Satisfying the sense of belonging and well being of an area that is connected to a new road.

Subsequent Governments and Federal Ministers have refused to call it a white elephant project, insisting that it will someday be completed. While the nation awaits its completion, visitors enjoy walking along the deck and asphalt surfacing, admiring the concrete handrails, taking photographs of themselves and the surroundings, while cows, goats and dogs play around. It is a great sight. Adiabo Bridge is by no means the longest bridge in Cross River State, as it is shorter than Itu Bridge and Itigidi Bridge, but it is undisputable that it is the most unused bridge in Cross River State, probably Nigeria.



NEWS BRIEF & SOCIAL DIARY

New Bonny branch

The NSE National has been informed that a new branch in Bonny will soon be inaugurated later in the year.

New COREN Assembly

The annual COREN assembly which used to hold between August and October has now been de-centralized into three zones which will be held on separate dates. The South East Zone, which comprises all branches and members in South-East and South-South geo-political zone will come up in August and will be held in Enugu.

Closure of Calabar Airport

The Margaret Ekpo International Airport will be closed down immediately after the elections in April. This is to allow for re-laying of asphalt on the runway. The airport is expected to be closed for some three months.

Child Dedication

Joseph Wariso of PHCN dedicated his lovely child on the 8th May 2011 at Apostolic Church, Ikot Eyo Assembly off parliamentary road. Reception followed at 1B first gate Parliamentary village.

JAN – MAR BIRTHDAYS

Charles C. Chilokwu	- 1 st January
Essesien B. Essien	- 1 st January
John U. Egbe	- 9 th January
Winston M. Esin	- 30 th January
Charles F. Efiom	- 29 th February
Henry A. Okonkwo	- 8 th March
Simeon U. Udey	- 20 th March

Have any social event like a birthday, wedding, burial, thanksgiving? Please let us know!

All members of NSE Calabar Branch should pay their **Annual Branch membership Dues** of ₦9,600 at 6th floor Okoi Arikpo House, No.12 Calabar Road or to **UBA acct no: 02480310000637**, Calabar Road Branch. You can also pay **National Annual Subscription** of ₦7,500 for members and ₦9,500 for Fellows directly to **Afribank acct no: 1420202215613**. All tellers should be forwarded to the secretariat for reconciliation at 6th floor Okoi Arikpo House, No.12 Calabar Road.

All contributions, comments and suggestions on the newsletter should be directed to the Editor-in-Chief 08033359106 or the Editor 08030477928 or nsecalabarbranch@yahoo.com