

Second half of your life can be better than the first

THE young man at the roadside stall called out to me, "Uncle, uncle, your change". Sigh. One can feel forever young, but one certainly cannot hold back the reality of physical aging.

Often, when I am called upon to speak at a forum or some college gathering, I would preface my presentation with a line that goes something like this, "I am glad that all of you in this room are young enough to call me Uncle."

I celebrated my birthday last month, and at one of the little parties among close friends, we sang that perennial Cliff Richard favourite *The Young Ones*.

Yes, those of us from the generation known as the baby boomers just love this number, don't we?

As the editor in me would put it:



The Young *Once* forever singing *The Young Ones*.

But everything in life is relative. To the octogenarians who may no longer be able to keep up in the fast lane on our highways, I am still very young.

At a lunch last week, one feisty lady who is doing great work in the cancer awareness arena added three years when she guessed my age, and apologised profusely after that.

But it's okay. In fact, a book given

to me last week is also a reminder about getting old.

Bob Buford's bestselling book, *Half Time*, is timely because it is premised on the fact that the second half of life can be better than the first.

Much better, says the author, if you can figure out what you want to do with the rest of your life.

So what is half time all about? When we watch a football match, we are always amazed when a team floundering in the first 45 minutes, three goals down, can come back in, refreshed, and score four goals to win the game.

And the commentator will of course go on about what the manager must have said in the dressing room to get the team going.

In our own half time, we need to pause and look at what we have been through in the first half of our life.

The list may not be the same for everyone, but is your list populated mainly by a string of achievements? The number of As you scored, the speed at which you were able to move from a humble abode to a massive bungalow, or the number of VIPs on your invitation list for your son's wedding?

Is your success defined only by material gain?

Or are you able to look back and mark out significant milestones that have very little to do with position, power and money?

And what are your plans for the next half of your life?

If success, as defined by the world, has eluded you or make you even more stressed out, would it not make better sense to turn your life around?

I notice that this book is normally given to people my age, but it could well be read by those who are about to start out in their professional working lives.

It is good to know ahead that some things we spend much time on in the first half of life may eventually turn out to be totally meaningless.

> Deputy executive editor Soo Ewe Jin thanks his dear wife for the birthday gift which included this lovely line from the Robert Browning poem, "Grow old along with me. The best is yet to be."

'Lawyers not up to par'

Young ones do not meet benchmark set by employers, says Bar

By NICHOLAS CHENG nicholascheng@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: All young Malaysian lawyers do not meet the standard international quality benchmark set by their employers, according to a Bar Council survey.

Bar Council treasurer Steven Thiru said the survey, conducted on 400 law firms, also found that employer satisfaction of new working lawyers was "shockingly low".

"It found that young lawyers practising for less than seven years do not have basic attributes like English proficiency, communication and critical thinking skills, and commitment to the profession, which is vital for the career," said Thiru at a forum between the Bar Council and the National Young Lawyers

Committee (NYLC). He said the problem was prevalent among both local and foreign university law graduates.

Thiru placed the blame on the failure of several tertiary education institutes, which did not include practical skills with academic learning.

"So, what we get is law firm employers having to retrain young lawyers in basic practical skills that they should have learned in university," he said.

The findings come in the wake of the NYLC's recommendations to the Bar to increase the wages of young lawyers and provide more flexible working hours.

The young lawyers have been complaining that they are being paid "too little" for the amount of work they do.

The NYLC, citing its own survey, said 28.2% of young lawyers in the Klang Valley wanted to leave the profession in the next five years while another 38.7% were considering leaving.

Outside the Klang Valley, 15.3% said they would leave and another 48.2% were considering.

"Most cite low salaries and no work-life balance as the main reasons for opting out," said NYLC chairman Richard Wee.

He said most young lawyers were attracted to overseas firms offering better benefits.

He said NYLC had suggested a starting pay of RM3,000 to RM4,000 a month for young lawyers in Klang Valley and RM2,500 for young lawyers elsewhere. The current salary is RM2,000.

He said that of the 14,500 lawyers in the country, 2,070 were considered as young.

Thiru and other senior lawyers however, said young lawyers did not deserve the raise.

Chee Siah Le Kee & Partners' Wong Fook Meng said young lawyers should earn the raise they were demanding for.

"They fail to realise that they should be working to learn and better themselves as lawyers, rather than focus on the cash.

"There are no shortcuts, young lawyers must create value and contribute meaningfully to their firms to justify higher compensation," said Wong, who is a member of the Bar Council's Constitutional Law Committee and former NYLC deputy chairman.

M'sia's role in promoting peace in Muslim world praised

KUALA LUMPUR: The Al-Quds International Institution (QII), one of the foremost Islamic welfare groups speaking for the Palestinian people, has given the thumbs up to Malaysia for standing up for peace, justice and human rights in the Muslim world.

QII chairman Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, in letters to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, expressed his gratitude towards Malaysia's dedication and commitment in supporting the people in Jerusalem.

"Unsurprisingly, we always found you among the first and in the forefront in supporting just and human causes; the issues of Palestine and Jerusalem, being among (them)," he wrote to Najib.

A-Qaradawi added: "We are greatly touched by your kind gesture in this context, especially with regard to the urgent need for similar initiatives.

"More importantly, Malaysia has been distinguished among Muslim countries with its impressive development strategy and openness, evolving as a referential centre and model for the Muslim world."

Al-Qaradawi said his organisation was proud that Malaysia had recently opened a QII branch; an achievement, he said, that would not have been possible without the Prime Minister's support and patronage.

He was referring to the Al-Quds Foundation Malaysia, a welfare foundation for the people of Palestine, which, among others, educates society on issues in the troubled state besides assisting the Palestinians.

Recently, Malaysia also brokered a peace agreement between the Philippines government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front on the establishment of the Bangsamoro autonomous region in southern Philippines.

The QII and many others, including from Malaysia and abroad, had praised the Government on its strategic role in ending some 40 years of conflict and suffering in the region and bringing about lasting peace and development in Mindanao. — Bernama

Actor-director Farid joins PVR to fight crime

By STEVEN CHIEW chiewccc@thestar.com.my

SHAH ALAM: The next time you get stopped by the police at a roadblock, you might be surprised to come face-to-face with popular actor and director Farid Kamil Zahari.

The 31-year-old former model has enlisted himself in the police volunteer reserve (PVR) and will be doing his bit to help in crime prevention.

"I joined the PVR not because I feel that our country is not safe.

"However, I understand that there are only about 110,000 policemen in our country of 28 million people.

"This is a big ratio," he said after submitting his application form at the Shah Alam police headquarters here at about 2.30pm yesterday.

"I think crime prevention is not only the duty of the police.

"The public must also be involved," he said, urging youths and students to join the PVR to help maintain peace in the country.

Farid also wants the public to

I think crime prevention is not only the duty of the police. The public must also be involved.

— FARID KAMIL ZAHARI

act immediately when witnessing any crime by calling the police or using the MyDistress national crime alert mobile application to get police help.

Head of the National Key Results Area for Selangor Deputy Supt Mohamed Mokhsin Mohamed Zon said that with Farid joining the PVR, it would be good publicity for the police and could influence more people to join the PVR as volunteer policemen.

He said that with the current recruitment drive from Oct 19 to Oct 23, they hoped to enrol 10,000 people into the PVR.

"PVR members will assist police officers in their duties, for example, to control traffic and manage roadblocks.



Taking on a new role: Farid attending a press screening at Sunway Pyramid in Bandar Sunway, Subang Jaya. Farid has enlisted himself in the PVR to help the police fight crime.