

If you spend any time with the teen or tween crowds, you’ve undoubtedly come in contact with Disney’s *High School Musical* movies. They’re bright, cheery, innocent, and inescapable. In these films, fresh-faced young people encounter a series of challenges and overcome them in route to holding a big show and learning much about themselves and their friends in the process. Even if you haven’t watched any of the movies, chances are good that you’ve seen the logo-wear at the mall, have a family member with the CD, or even tapped a toe to one of the songs on the radio. A new concept in entertainment? Nah. Does anyone recall the Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland musicals from the 1930s and 40s? Same stuff, just the actors, music, slang, and clothes have changed.

While I’m not telepathic, I suspect that one or more readers might be asking, “Have you finally cracked? What does *High School Musical* have to do with materials, TMS, or anything else that I might remotely care about?” I have quick and succinct answers: “It was inevitable.” And, “Nothing.” That said, there’s method to my madness (or is it madness to my method?). Here goes: The movies put me in mind of the TMS Annual Meeting, an event that looms large in my thoughts as it is but four weeks away as I write (and because this issue of *JOM* will be inserted in the program). I know that I’m on a rhetorical limb, but consider these remarkable parallels:

*High School Musical* and the TMS Annual Meeting both . . .

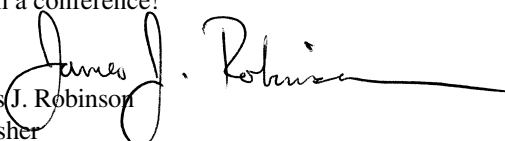
. . . require an army of students: The Annual Meeting is a great destination for students, what with tutorial talks and a career forum, a session on resume writing and job interviewing, loads of interfacing opportunities with professionals in the field, and fun stuff like the Student Networking Mixer and the 3rd Annual TMS Materials Bowl, now named the Alcoa Materials Bowl thanks to sponsorship from the corporate giant (even though Alcoa is combating some tough times, it is still putting an emphasis on nurturing young people).

. . . require a Herculean effort by professionals and volunteers all focused on the same goal: Nearly three dozen professional staff members, hundreds of corporate exhibitors and sponsors, and literally thousands of volunteers are pulling together to assure the presentation of roughly 2,500 papers in more than 50 topical symposia; to arrange myriad high-value continuing education activities; to conduct too-many-to-count networking and social events; to plan the future activities of the society via committee meetings; to showcase new products and services; and to honor the accomplishments of others with awards and honorary events.

. . . provide prime opportunities for logo placements. In addition to the familiar TMS logo, you’ll see a score and a half of logos outside the exhibit hall as our sponsoring companies underwrite a variety of services and functions. One that you won’t miss: Fives Solios, which is supplying a high-quality canvas messenger bag for the attendees’ registration materials instead of a typical, nondegradable plastic bag. Fives Solios is also sponsoring the recycling containers among several other “green” meeting initiatives.

. . . feature perky and flamboyant song and dance numbers. We’ll have authors breaking into song while discussing dendrite growth and attendees forming line dances in honor of dislocations. . . . Sorry, I made that one up. It would be cool if true, however.

What I don’t have to make up is the fact that the TMS Annual Meeting will be a tremendous meeting with a cast of thousands. To that, I can only say, “Hey kids, let’s put on a conference!”

  
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Publisher

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