

# AICN Newsletter

*The Quarterly Publication of the Alliance of IEEE Consultants Networks*

Report from AICNCC Chairman Hermann Amaya

## AICN Meeting To Address a Number of Issues Confronting IEEE Consultants

The Alliance of IEEE Consultants Networks Coordinating Committee (AICNCC) has been meeting regularly over the past few months, and had an in-person meeting on 18 May in St. Petersburg, Fla. At this meeting, AICNCC addressed several topics, but most importantly, they discussed the state of the IEEE-USA Consultants Database. The Committee believes this Database provides businesses the ability to do nationwide searches for consultants, to assist them in completing their projects. The Committee is looking at ways to improve the service focusing on enhancing the database's capabilities so businesses can find IEEE Consultants more easily.

Specifically, the Committee brainstormed ideas on

ways to increase exposure of this service to businesses, as well as increase the IEEE-USA Consultants Database subscribership. AICNCC members now have several ideas on how to achieve these goals, and will be looking to implement them in the upcoming months. The Committee also welcomes suggestions from IEEE members. AICNCC will report on the progress in future issues of the AICN newsletter.

AICNCC's goal is to facilitate networking capabilities and provide professional assistance and resources to self-employed U.S. IEEE members, who are technical consultants practicing their professions independently.

*Consultants Network News*

## AICN Welcomes a New Network in Michigan

The Alliance of IEEE Consultants Networks Coordinating Committee (AICNCC) congratulates and welcomes Sharan Kalwani, and the IEEE Southeastern Michigan Section Consultants Network, on forming an Affinity Group.

This newest Consultants Network became official on 10 April. If you want to wish them well, check IEEE-USA's Web site for contact information for the Southeastern Michigan Section Consultants Network. If other groups want to form a Consultants Network, IEEE-USA's Web site also contains step-by-step instructions about how to become a formal network. We encourage all Consultants Networks to register as *Affinity Groups*. After a group forms a network, they can take advantage of IEEE's branding and resources, and also qualify for funding through IEEE Section rebates.

If IEEE members belong to a Consultants Network, but don't see their Network's contact information on our IEEE-USA Consultants Network listing, please contact Daryll Griffin at [d.r.griffin@ieee.org](mailto:d.r.griffin@ieee.org).



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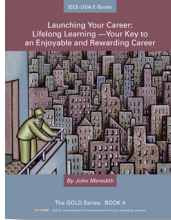
**[www.ieeeusa.org/business](http://www.ieeeusa.org/business)**

**IEEE★USA**

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## Free IEEE-USA E-Books for Members in May and June: *Launching Your Career—Book 4: Lifelong Learning—Your Key to an Enjoyable and Rewarding Career* (1-31 May); and *The Best of Today's Engineer: On Career Transitions* (1-30 June)

As a special benefit to IEEE members for the month of May, IEEE-USA is offering a free e-book, *Launching Your Career—Book 4: Lifelong Learning—Your Key to an Enjoyable and Rewarding Career*, written by former IEEE-USA President John Meredith.



This fourth e-book in the series is a guide for engineering students who are about to begin their careers, or the engineers just launching their careers. Meredith shares a number of practical ideas and thoughts that can help make lifelong learning a priority in pursuing an exciting and rewarding career.

*Launching Your Career—Book 4: Lifelong Learning—Your Key to an Enjoyable and Rewarding Career*, can be downloaded at <http://www.ieeeusa.org/communications/ebooks/files/47skc0ie/Launching-Your-Career-Lifelong-Learning.pdf>, for free to IEEE members. The nonmember price is \$7.99.

In June, IEEE-USA will offer *The Best of Today's Engineer: On Career Transitions*, a collection of articles that can

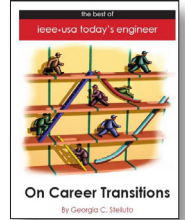
help you handle almost any situation you might face in your career, whether you're changing projects, employers, or career paths.

To purchase IEEE Members-only products, and to receive the Member discount on eligible products, members must log in with their IEEE Web Account.

To learn about the many benefits of IEEE membership, visit [http://www.ieee.org/membership\\_services/membership/join/](http://www.ieee.org/membership_services/membership/join/).

### Call for Authors

IEEE-USA seeks authors to write an e-book, or a series of e-books on career guidance and development topics. If you have an idea for an e-book that will educate other IEEE members on a particular topic of expertise, email your e-book proposal to IEEE-USA E-Book Chair, Gus Gaynor, at [g.gaynor@ieee.org](mailto:g.gaynor@ieee.org) and to IEEE-USA Publishing Manager, Georgia C. Stelluto, at [g.stelluto@ieee.org](mailto:g.stelluto@ieee.org).



## IEEE-USA SmartBrief Highlights Story on Employer Needs

IEEE-USA SmartBrief provides summaries and links to relevant and important news items of interest to U.S. IEEE members. Published every Thursday, IEEE-USA Smart Brief replaces *IEEE-USA's Eye on Washington*, which focused on political activities affecting engineers.

The Alliance of IEEE Consultants Networks Coordinating Committee (AICNCC) has asked Smart Brief to include news items that may be of interest to engineering consultants. The 28 February issue of IEEE-USA SmartBrief included a [story on engineering skills employers are seeking](#). AICNCC believes consultants will find the following brief informative:

[Sign up](#) today for *IEEE-USA Smart Brief* to finish reading this and other exciting stories.



### Big Data, Ruby on Rails skills are cited among hardest to find

Technology firms are having a difficult time finding engineers who are proficient in Ruby on Rails, Big Data and mobile technology, Keith Cline writes. Cloud computing and enterprise software are two more areas that firms struggle to find talent for, he writes.

[Inc. online \(free registration\)](#)

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...articles from **the institute**

## ■ Building a Better Consulting Practice

By JOHN R. PLATT 6 May 2013

Bruce Katcher is passionate about consulting. "I don't think anybody should have to work for an employer," says Katcher, founder and executive director of the Center for Independent Consulting, and author of *An Insider's Guide to Building a Better Consulting Practice* [American Management Association, 2010]. "If you have skills, you don't need any boss other than yourself. You can own your life."

Katcher took his message to a recent meeting of the IEEE Boston Section's Consultants Network, where engineers and computer scientists gathered to learn about the best business models and marketing methods for a consulting practice. Consultants Networks help IEEE members establish themselves as independent contractors.

Read the rest of the article in the [6 May issue](#) of *The Institute*.

## ■ Legal Experts Offer Strategies for Entrepreneurs

By JOHN R. PLATT 5 April 2013

A new company can be doomed, if the right legal, financial and intellectual property protections are not put in place at the very start. That was the message from experts speaking on *Legal and Patent Strategies for Entrepreneurs*, a recent event jointly sponsored by the IEEE Boston Section's [Consultants Network](#) and [Entrepreneurs Network](#). The Consultants Network helps IEEE members establish themselves as freelance or independent contractors, while the Entrepreneurs Network supports members who want to go into business for themselves.

Read the rest of the article in the [5 April issue](#) of *The Institute*.

## ■ Dismal Unemployment Numbers for Electrical Engineers

By ANIA MONACO 24 April 2013

Despite talk of a recovering economy in the United States, unemployment numbers for electrical engineers have become significantly worse. That's according to an [analysis of U.S. Labor Department data by IEEE-USA](#).

Electrical engineering jobs went down by 40,000 in the first quarter of the year, with the unemployment rate rising to 6.5 percent, according to the analysis. In 2010 and 2011, electrical engineers' unemployment rate was just 3.4 percent, according to the report.

"Seasonal fluctuations are normal, but the first quarter unemployment spike is alarming," said Keith Grzelak, IEEE-USA vice president of government relations.

Read the rest of the article in the [24 April issue](#) of *The Institute*.

A Letter from IEEE-USA President-Elect Gary L. Blank

## Self-Employed Consultant Elected IEEE-USA President for 2014



### FEEDFORWARD

Dear Fellow IEEE Consultants/Members,

Thank you for your show of confidence in electing me to the office of IEEE-USA President 2014. I came up through the ranks—first, as the founder and chair of the IEEE Chicago/Rockford Consultants Network; then, as the chair of the Alliance of IEEE Consultants Networks (AICN). After that, I spent a couple of years as member-at-large on the IEEE-USA Board, and then as the vice-president of Career and Member Services. In 2014, I will be IEEE-USA's President.

I have been a consultant in industry for many years, specializing in controls, electronics and power; and I have provided consulting services for more than 40 client corporations. I also have many years of experience as a full-time university professor of electrical engineering.

IEEE-USA has been a cornerstone in my professional career, and I really value being a U.S. IEEE member. It has kept me technically current in my field. As U.S. IEEE members, we have access to many IEEE publications, and dozens of IEEE-USA E-Books, many of which are free to members. Go to <http://www.ieeeusa.org/communications/ebooks>. I have also learned so much about modern engineering software through my volunteer efforts at IEEE-USA.

IEEE-USA has an excellent selection of career resources, including a job site at <http://careers.ieee.org/>.

For independent self-employed U.S. IEEE members, there are now more than 37 IEEE-USA Consultants Networks—and this number continues to grow. I have networked, not only with my own Network members, but also with members of other Networks—and these interactions have opened many doors. <http://ieeeusa.org/business>

The [IEEE-USA Consultants Database](#) has provided several opportunities and clients for me. We have bundled our IEEE-USA Consultants Database service; so now, if you have a listing in the database, you will receive an invitation to an exclusive annual webinar for consultants, and a new IEEE-USA E-Book. If you are paying about \$200 a year for membership dues, you can easily recover all of this expense, and much more. [Member discounts](#) are available for car rentals, Dell products, HP products, FedEx, software, moving and storage, Wiley publications, to name a few. IEEE has done the research and shopping for us. They have secured excellent sources at great prices.

Being self-employed, I needed to get my own insurance policies. I have obtained many of these [through IEEE](#): life insurance, disability insurance, health insurance, professional liability insurance, auto insurance, home insurance, are just a few you can consider.

### FEEDBACK

With the changes in industry and the economy, more members are becoming self-employed consultants. On their membership renewal forms, more than 17,000 members have indicated their involvement and interest in consulting.

There is much to be done to improve IEEE-USA; and with your help, I will pursue this now, and in 2014, when I am IEEE-USA President. Will you please tell me what you like about IEEE-USA? Also, what you would like to see changed, removed, added, or expanded? What more do consultants want IEEE-USA to do? I will respond by thanking you for communicating with me. Your feedback is very valuable. It helps us to know what you (the member) want.

E-mail me at [g.l.blank@ieee.org](mailto:g.l.blank@ieee.org). Briefly describe four things about IEEE-USA you like, and four things about IEEE-USA you would like to see changed, or added. In your e-mail's subject line, simply put IEEE-USA. You may include your name, region, section and phone number-- but those are optional.

*Dr. Gary Blank is the IEEE-USA President-Elect 2013, IEEE-USA President 2014. He is active in both industry and academia.*