

## NEWS BYTES

### Merrill Buckley New IEEE-USA

**President-Elect:** Merrill W. Buckley Jr.'s 19,179 votes for the post of IEEE-USA President-Elect for 1999 will make him IEEE-USA's third elected president come the year 2000. Buckley beat candidates Michael R. Andrews and Charles S.

Lessard, who received 14,069 and 8,563 votes, respectively. U.S. members also selected Michael C. Mulder (20,336 votes) over Robert P. Noberini (18,872 votes) for the post of 1999-2000 IEEE-USA Member-at-Large.

### IEEE-USA Helps Shape Digital

**Copyright Bill:** Congress passed in October 1998 the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, which dealt with the World Intellectual Property Organization Copyright Treaties implementation and online-liability issues. Before passage of the bill, Congress heeded the call of IEEE-USA and other engineering organizations by stripping controversial provisions broadly protecting databases. In addition, IEEE-USA worked closely with Senate Judiciary Committee staff to craft appropriate language that it believes will establish balanced protection for Internet content providers and Internet service providers (ISPs). Content providers now will have stronger protection against Internet theft of their copyrighted material, while ISPs will not be held liable for possible copyright infringement their subscribers commit as long as ISPs remove the infringing Web site once the copyright holder notifies them.

### More Legislative Success Stories:

In addition to the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, IEEE-USA lobbied successfully in 1998 toward passage of the Year 2000 Information and Readiness Disclosure Act (S.2392); The Commission on the Advancement of Women in Science, Engineering, and Technology Development Act (H.R. 3007); and an act to establish Maryland Science and Technology Scholarships (S.B. 174/H.B. 249). IEEE-USA also supported efforts resulting in significant increases in research funding for the National Science Foundation (up 8.4 percent), reversing declines in defense funding of basic and applied research (up 6.1 percent), as well as gaining extension of the Research and Experimentation Tax Credit through June 30 of this year. Finally, IEEE-USA was able to help secure passage in the Senate of the Federal Research Investment Act (S. 2217), legislation which would authorize a doubling of federal support for research and development over the next 12 years. IEEE-USA will work this year toward passage of this legislation in the House of Representatives.

— Chris Currie, IEEE-USA Staff

For the latest news from IEEE-USA, see *IEEE-USA This Week* at [www.ieeeusathisweek.org](http://www.ieeeusathisweek.org).

# IEEE★USA PERSPECTIVES

[www.ieeeusa.org/usab/PERSPECTIVES](http://www.ieeeusa.org/usab/PERSPECTIVES)

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Bimonthly News and Insights Relating to Professional Interests of U.S. Electrical, Electronics and Computer Engineers

## 1998: A Year of Action, Celebration



As the new year begins, so does another presidency for IEEE-USA. In this year-end review, John R. Reinert, IEEE-USA's first member-elected president, reflects on 1998 activities. This article is an excerpt of his report to the IEEE-USA Board of Directors in November. In a guest editorial in the March edition of *IEEE-USA Perspectives*, new President Paul Kostek will share his goals for 1999.

During 1998, our 25th anniversary year, IEEE-USA was a busy and energetic organization, and we made great strides on some significant goals. Though we still need to work on some areas, this has been a time of learning and celebration. In the April 1998 issue of *Perspectives*, I discussed key IEEE-USA activities for the year. Below I summarize how we've done on these key initiatives.

★ **Transition IEEE-USA to the new, autonomous entity representative of, and more responsive to, the interests of U.S. members.**

This year we maintained our committee structure based on recommendations from our planning retreat in January. There was particular success in technology policy as Vice President Ned Sauthoff put in place a top-down, strategic-plan-driven approach to developing technology policy position statements and activities.

★ **Enhance cooperative efforts with the activities of the Regional Activities, Technical Activities and Educational Activities boards.**

IEEE-USA has a strong program for training local chairs of the Professional Activities Committee for Engineers (PACE), but a similar program does not exist for other local officers. This is a top priority for Regional Activities and we will work with them and also place greater emphasis on chapter-building with Technical Activities.

★ **Provide greater visibility for IEEE-USA to our volunteers and members.**

We've made great strides to improve visibility and appreciation of IEEE-USA's contributions to local activities by having IEEE-USA officer representation at all U.S. Regional meetings. Both of our Operations Committee meetings were held in conjunction with Region meetings, providing volunteers an opportunity to meet board members and provide feedback.

★ **Continue to develop the IEEE-USA Professional Activities Conference into a meeting with wider appeal in the engineering community.**

This was a very successful year for the conference, with great attendance, record numbers of Graduates of the Last Decade (GOLD) members, workshops adapted from IEEE Quality College, and closer coupling with the Engineering Management Society. We also had Silver Jubilee anniversary celebrations with prizes, and continued to support our successful PACE leaders' training program.

★ **Reduce dependence on member assessment by providing targeted products that are self-sustaining.**

Our primary product in this area is *Today's Engineer*, a magazine targeted at developing the non-technical side of engineering. We completed our first year of publication with mixed success. There is no doubt about the quality of the award-winning magazine, and the staff and volunteers

working on the magazine are to be congratulated for their work. However, the magazine is still in the investment phase, and we need to work on growth and advertising revenue.

★ **Enhance relations with industry.**

Some people consider that our position on the H-1B guest-worker visa bill has hurt industry relations. However, our success in lobbying has identified IEEE-USA not as a passive reflector for industry positions, but as a concerned, powerful and respected partner with differing views on some issues.

... **And More**

Although our activity to limit H-1B increases generated much attention including news articles, increased member grassroots activities and expansion of our Web public policy resources, other legislative actions we took include:

- ★ Successfully opposing passage of undesirable intellectual property restrictions on use of databases proposed in the Collections of Information Antipiracy Act;
- ★ Supporting passage of Senate legislation to increase federal investment in research and development;
- ★ Working to extend the research and experimentation tax credit through 1999;
- ★ Working on pension portability, improvements to individual retirement accounts;
- ★ Restoring the graduate exclusion to the tax credit for employer-provided educational assistance; and
- ★ Promoting the exchange of information on the Y2K computer problem through liability relief.

Throughout the year, we also closely monitored membership statistics to ensure growth, and worked with the American Association of Engineering Societies on issues that affect all engineers. We also celebrated our anniversary through a special Web page providing articles, IEEE-USA history and trivia, and a contest where members won IEEE and IEEE-USA career materials and merchandise.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the Board, the IEEE-USA staff and the many other IEEE-USA volunteers for their support during this year. I am proud of the progress we've made in establishing the "new" IEEE-USA. We're a more effective, efficient organization, both in congressional interactions and in providing member services because of the collective efforts of many, and I'm glad to have played a small part in enabling these successes. Clearly we have many challenges ahead of us and I look forward to working with 1999 President Paul Kostek and President-Elect Merrill Buckley.

— John R. Reinert, IEEE-USA Past President



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