In 1997 the end of IEEE-USA as we know it? In a way yes. This past year was our last one as IEEE United States Activities before changing our name to IEEE-USA. As your last IEEE Vice President for Professional Activities and United States Activities Board (USA) Chair, I had the unique opportunity to work with everyone across this organization during our transitional year. Now you can look forward to making the most of IEEE-USA with your new leader: John R. Reinfurt as 1998 president, Paul Kozak as president-elect, Jerry Aukland and Frank Lord as members-at-large; Arthur Van Gelder as secretary-treasurer; and Michael R. Andrews, Jean Eason, Ned R. Sauthoff, Joseph V. Lillie, and Gerald Alphonse as vice presidents.

This year is also of great personal significance to IEEE-USA, since we celebrate a special anniversary: it marks exactly 25 years since the IEEE amended its Constitution to add the professional role to our fraternalistic, leading to the creation of USAB.

As we look ahead, let's consider our activities during 1997:

- Industry Outreach Launches Groundwork for Partnerships
- One of the initiatives I initiated in 1997 was the development of closer ties with industry. Using the state of Virginia as a test case, I attended its second Technology Summit and met with leaders of the Northern Virginia Technology Council and staff of the Potomac Knowledgeway.
- High technology councils of companies exist across all U.S. cities, municipalities and states. Efforts to reach out to them can prove fruitful for us, so we are now looking to identify areas of mutual concern and work to get local IEEE sections, councils, and consultants' networks involved, and to grow these partnerships all across the country.
- IEEE-USA Thinks Outside the Box
- In 1997, we also got the ball rolling on an idea that was born in 1995, when we found that no trade magazine or journal devoted editorial content regularly and exclusively to enhancing engineers' careers. After careful planning and production during the past year, IEEE-USA is now publishing Today's Engineer.
- The 48-page quarterly magazine, which debuts this month, is devoted exclusively to the professional lives of engineers in all technical fields. With Gas Gaynor as editor-in-chief, backed by a mostly volunteer-driven editorial board, we're counting on Today's Engineer to help your career, and — with your paid subscriptions — establish a significant new revenue source for IEEE-USA.
- Committees' Work Places IEEE-USA in Spotlight

As usual, our many volunteers worked throughout the year on programs, services and publications to benefit all members.

- The Professional Activities Committee for Engineers once again held a successful Professional Activities Conference, this time in St. Petersburg, Fla.
- Our IEEE-USA Job Listing Service (LLS), which is now averaging 1,000 queries per day from job searchers, continues to make it even better, including adding an Entry-Level LLS.
- The Employment Assistance Committee published the Engineer's Guide to Lifelong Employment, a valuable career-guidance resource.

- Working with a broad coalition representing business organizations, educational institutions and engineering societies, the Engineering Employment Benefits Committee realized a major legislative priority in the 105th Congress: the enactment of legislation that expands access by middle-income Americans to tax-favored Individual Retirement Accounts as part of the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997. The committee also helped to establish a new coalition to promote further pension portability improvements;
- The Pricewaterhouse Committee increased its efforts to publicize its important goals, and USAB began working with the IEEE Educational Activities Board and other groups on a precollege education workshop on technical literacy to take place this year;
- IEEE-USA's Alliance of IEEE Consultants' Networks published, for the second year, its national directory and established a searchable database on the Web; and
- The Surveys Committee published the 1997 IEEE U.S. Member Salary and Fringe Benefits Survey with a new format, which had stronger sales than expected, and published a salary workbook that allows readers to use the regression analysis from the survey to generate estimates of compensation from their peers.

- Tech Policy Symposium Brings Attention to Hot Issues

IEEE-USA held a successful 1997 Technology Policy Council Symposium in June. The event, on the role of government in restructuring the electric power industry, attracted target audiences including government officials and staff. It received good press coverage, and exceeded attendance and revenue projections.

- Intellectual Property Works to Protect Inventions

The IEEE-USA Intellectual Property Committee, in written testimony and meetings with key staff, was successful in having language added to a proposed patent reform bill. With that language, inventors who file only in the United States would not have to publish their patent application until the patents are actually awarded. Previous versions of the legislation would have mandated publication 18 months after the patent was filed, while the current bill extends that period to 36 months.

- IEEE-USA Leadership in AAES Comes Closer to Home

In the past, the IEEE President served as the IEEE's voting representative on the American Association of Engineering Societies (AAES) Board of Governors. In 1998, this role is being undertaken by our recent Past President, Arne Beijer. With the IEEE President elected on the Board, the IEEE-USA is responsible for representing the IEEE members on this organization. The IEEE-USA is the only affiliate on the AAES Board that is a member of the engineering societies and is the only affiliate that elects a Past President to the Board.

- Coming Next: A Celebration!

During this "new and improved" year when we also celebrate our 25th birthday, we hope to see you and your colleagues at special events and projects that will highlight two and a half decades of IEEE-USA.

Meanwhile, I want to thank all those volunteers and staff who made my tenure both enjoyable and rewarding. I feel fortunate that I do not have to cut any of my ties with either staff or volunteers, since I will continue to serve IEEE-USA this year as Past Chair.

— Daniel Benigni, 1997 USAB Chair