



# AURUM

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The Canadian Newsletter for IEEE GOLD

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## From the Editor

Hello!

A couple of major changes have taken place in Aurum staff since the spring issue.

Our French editor for Aurum, Peter Guy, is leaving Aurum and his position as Montréal Gold to pursue studies overseas. Peter had been with Aurum since its inception in 2003. He played a major role in shaping Aurum to its present form. Peter's dedication and enthusiasm will be missed. We wish him all the best in his studies.

Gerry Dorvius will be replacing Peter and taking over both of his responsibilities. Welcome aboard Gerry!

I am also very excited to welcome our two new news reporters, Natalie Raffoul from Ottawa Gold and Jin Malm from Vancouver Gold. Their first articles are being published in this edition. Watch for regular reports from them in future editions.

Just like Natalie and Jin other members can also email me articles at [ahsan@ieee.org](mailto:ahsan@ieee.org).

Have a warm and fun filled summer!

**Ahsan Upal, P.Eng.**  
**Publisher, Aurum**

## GOLD Canada Chairs

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## About Aurum

**"Aurum" is Latin word for "gold" and is where the periodic symbol Au originates. The Aurum newsletter is published quarterly each year, with the next issue being in September 2005. The next deadline for submissions is August 19, 2005.**

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## EA Tour and Mini-Recruitment Event

Jin Malm, Vancouver GOLD

The EA Tour and Mini-Recruitment Event organized by IEEE GOLD Vancouver and EA Canada ([www.eacanada.com](http://www.eacanada.com)) attracted over 25 attendees. Thanks to the generosity of EA, the attendees enjoyed a typical engineering event feast containing pizza & pop!

The event was especially enjoyed by all because Bert Sandie, a software engineer at EA, talked about the engineering/project management career paths at EA. He also provided an overview of the gaming industry and discussed the stages involved in producing a game, from storyboard creation to "finaling" stage, apparently quite similar to the film industry.

Bert's insight into the EA work culture was inspiring. The environment at EA, described to be a "fun and creative team," was apparent when interacting with presenter Bert Sandie and the onsite recruiters Marc Belanger, Ian Jarvis, and Meredyth Spence. The organizers presented themselves as an easy-going team that enjoys their work at EA.

At the end of the presentation and lively discussion about career opportunities at EA & the gaming industry, we split into three tour groups. The tour showcase the benefits of working at EA which includes a full gym facility with towel service, free games, locally sponsored daily seminars for professional development, and access to the EA library, containing items varying from comic books to advanced computer graphics textbooks.

I would like to thank Marc Belanger, Ian Jarvis, Meredyth Spence, and Bert Sandie for putting in the time and effort to organize such a fun and informative evening.

## New IEEE Officer Information on IEEE Website

IEEE has created a page which is specifically for new volunteer officers. This website was created as a replacement to the new officer welcome kits that were distributed via the mail. The website contains links to Section, Chapter, Affinity Group Officer Training, Unit Calendar which lists a year of IEEE Section officer duties, the required reporting from the unit, and a letter to the volunteer's employer on the volunteer's activity stating the value of their contributions.

On a monthly basis, IEEE will be distributing the welcome letter directing the new officers to the web page noted above. If you have questions, please contact staff at [sec-chap-support@ieee.org](mailto:sec-chap-support@ieee.org).

## The IEEE Job Site: Pros and Cons More Pros

Natalie Raffoul, Ottawa GOLD

I was inspired to write this, my first piece, by the recent article in IEEE's publication, THE INSTITUTE, June 2005 Issue, entitled "Job Site Takes Global View", by William Leventon. The article discusses the progress made to date, by the IEEE Job Site, in terms of reaching out to IEEE members in jurisdictions outside of the U.S. Interestingly enough, one of the areas that the IEEE Job Site is focussing on is Canada (Region 7). Mr. Buryk, Manager of the IEEE Job Site, indicates in the aforementioned article that of the 14,000 IEEE members in Canada, only about 1000 of them are currently registered on the site. "[W]e need a lot more of them registered to get employers excited about posting jobs," he says. Well Mr. Buryk, make that 1001 – I just signed up!

In a matter of five minutes, I was able to post my resume on the site and set up particular constraints to search jobs in Canada. The IEEE Job Site is very user-friendly. While the site to some may appear very U.S. centric, given that selecting the IEEE Career Resources tab brings you directly to the IEEE-USA homepage for careers, and that many of the suggestions with respect to job searching tips and career resources appear to be focussed on U.S. based employers and employees alike, these resources are also relevant to Canadians searching for jobs in the EE fields. For example, there are a number of links to career resource sites which, for example, provide tips on how to deal with headhunters and advice on how to manage and plan a career. Obviously, many of us could benefit from this type of advice while undertaking the often onerous task of job searching. In addition, there are postings on the IEEE Job Site for positions available all across Canada. These positions seem to run the gamut, ranging from university institutions, such as The University of Western Ontario, utility companies, such as B.C. Hydro, and various technology companies, such as Research in Motion (RIM). In fact, RIM accounts for more than 100 postings on the IEEE Job Site. In addition, there are staffing agencies, such as Talent Lab Inc., that are posting on behalf of their clients.

One of the advantages of using the IEEE Job Site is the enhanced job search criteria available to a potential employee searching jobs, or to an employer posting a job. For instance, Internet recruitment and job searching companies, such as Monster™ and Workopolis, classify engineering job categories into broader categories, for example, electrical engineering is a single category. By comparison, the IEEE Job Site breaks down these categories into all of the smaller and emerging technology areas relevant to electrical engineers. Some of the smaller categories include instrumentation and measurement, nuclear and plasma sciences, power engineering, robotics and automation, and semiconductors, just to name a few. For job searchers, this is an invaluable time-saving feature as sifting through thousands of jobs in a general engineering category can be difficult if not prohibitive to the busy professional. These smaller categories enable job searchers to quickly check specific categories for new postings on a regular if not daily basis.

From the perspective of the employer, the IEEE job site makes sense. EE companies can focus their talent search on potential employees concurrently seeking positions in their technology area. Simply from a cost point of view, the IEEE Job Site offers some significantly cheaper rates than other Canadian job searching companies, such as Monster™ and Workopolis. For example, a single job posted for 30 days on the IEEE Job Site will cost an employer \$199.00 USD. Posting a job on the Monster™ site will cost approximately \$495.00 CAD, per job posting, over a period of 30 days. Workopolis is more expensive on a single posting basis as they charge a rate of \$695.00 CAD, per job posting, over the same 30 day period. In view of the budgetary constraints and cost saving measures most EE companies are facing, such savings can be invaluable to these companies.

So, here's the plug: support 'our' site, and sign up today on the IEEE Job Site, <http://careers.ieee.org/>. If nothing else, it is another forum for exploring exciting new career opportunities in the EE fields. And my philosophy is that it is always important to ensure that you know your value in the marketplace by continually exploring new opportunities. You don't want to miss out on finding that perfect job...

## News from Southern Alberta GOLD

Ahsan Upal, Southern Alberta GOLD

Hello everyone!

I am the new GOLD chair for the IEEE Southern Alberta. Jason Long, the previous chair, has stepped down to pursue other activities. I want to thank Jason for his hard work and contribution to ensuring that GOLD was well represented here in Southern Alberta. All the best to you Jason in your future endeavors.

My brief background is as follows. My first job after graduation in 1999 was in field support with TransCanada Pipelines in Regina. Then I worked in electrical design with a transformer manufacturer also in Regina. Last year, I moved to Calgary to start work in electrical transmission with AltaLink Management Ltd.

I have been an IEEE member since 1996. I was the founding chair of the Southern Saskatchewan GOLD. I am also the current editor of Aurum.

I like to see a strong GOLD presence here in Alberta. We have a good membership base with 160 GOLD members and a great potential to grow further. We are half way through the current year but I believe we have time to organize a couple of small events. My plan for the first event is to have a guided tour of an electrical substation in August. The second event can be a tour of a telecom tower site in October or a presentation. Please stay tuned for more details in your emails. If you would like to help organize these events then please email me at [ahsan@ieee.org](mailto:ahsan@ieee.org) or call at 267-4274. Your input and feedback is always welcome. Thank you.

# Aurum News Reporter: A Personal Introduction

Natalie Raffoul, Ottawa GOLD

As a newly inducted news reporter for the AURUM, as a means of introducing myself I thought I would play a bit of a 'guessing game' regarding my career choice.

A graduate of the University of Western Ontario in Electrical Engineering, for the past four years, I have been working on various technology in the Electrical Engineering (EE) fields. One might say though, that my work in the EE fields is performed at arm's length. In my current role, I deal with inventors and companies regarding various products or methods they are developing in fields such as security, telecommunications, electronics, fibre optics, and mechanical-related technology on the periphery of these fields. My professional goal is to aid my clients in protecting their invention by writing an 'application' which describes and claims an invention embodied in their product or process. The application is then filed in a government office. After filing the application, we wait patiently, often for several years or more, for an answer from the government examining office as to whether an intellectual property right will be granted for the invention. My employer is located in Ottawa and specializes in intellectual property (IP) law, as well as patent and trade-mark agency work, but I am not a lawyer....So what am I?

I am known affectionately by my peers as a patent professional, or a patent agent in training. The career of a patent professional is a rewarding one. As you can imagine, given the dynamic nature of innovation, my career choice permits me to stay current with leading edge technology. This career is really a marriage of technical skills with communication skills. The work I perform primarily involves meeting with inventors, who work in the fields of telecommunications, electronics, computing, or software, to extract as much information from them, about the details of their often highly complex inventions. The information extracted from the inventor is drafted into a patent application. The art in drafting a patent application is that it must include all of the relevant technical details to ensure a skilled artist in the field can reproduce the invention, and yet be understandable by the final arbiter, a Federal Court judge with no relevant technical knowledge! As you can imagine, this can be a challenge. Often, just decoding the acronyms proprietarily used by technology companies can account for a few hours of my time at the outset of drafting a patent application.

While my primary focus is to aid clients in procuring patents, my job also requires my colleagues and me to stay abreast on issues relating to developments in copyright and trade-mark law, as well as industrial designs and domain name related issues. Patenting business methods is the new buzz in the 'patent world'. For example, Priceline™ is best known for allowing consumers to "name your own price" for airline tickets, and has an issued U.S. Patent, U.S.P.N. 5,794,207, for both the "reverse auction" method and the use of "buyer-driven commerce". Priceline™ in effect convinced the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office that it had invented a new way of doing business, one that was fundamentally different from any other form of electronic commerce today.

Disputes over domain names are also commonplace in today's business world. You may be aware of one high profile case in the United States over candyland.com. Both Hasbro and an adult entertainment provider desired the candyland.com domain name. Hasbro was too late to register the name itself, but it was not too late to sue. The domain name is now under Hasbro ownership. Understanding other facets of IP law is critical for IP professionals so as not to overlook potential issues or pitfalls for clients.

This fall I expect accreditation as a Canadian patent agent. This designation will allow me to communicate directly with the various patent offices as a registered Canadian patent agent, and by virtue of reciprocity, also as a registered U.S. patent agent. Lawyers, engineers, and scientists who wish to practice patent agency before the Canadian Patent Office, must all qualify to become patent agents. Another career avenue for EE graduates interested in working on leading edge technology is that of becoming a Patent Examiner for the Canadian Patent Office, but I will save that discussion for another article!

## Breathing New Life into Sections & Chapters

from *The Institute*, December 2004 by Erica Vonderheid

Bringing a dormant IEEE section or chapter back to life is not as difficult as it may seem, say volunteers who have done it. Mostly it requires a few dedicated members willing to brainstorm ways of attracting others back to meetings and enticing people to join. Although this article is focused on Sections and Chapters, the principals in reactivating an IEEE unit surely is also applicable to GOLD Affinity Groups.

For the complete article, [visit The Institute on the web](#) and click on "Institute Archive" for the December 2004 article.