



What's New in the Literature?

by **Terrance Malkinson**

➤ **Plastic**, a word that originally meant “pliable and easily shaped” and now a name for a category of materials called synthetic polymers was created 150 years ago by John Wesley Hyatt and provides a lightweight, strong, flexible and inexpensive material that has many applications. Many products, essential and non-essential, used globally, contain plastic. Starting in the 1960s however the environmental problems associated with the product has become a subject of discussion and the rhetoric has escalated with the discovery of macro- and micro-particles in the oceans. The cover story of the June, 2016 issue of *National Geographic* [233(6):40-91. www.nationalgeographic.com] authored by Laura Parker provides an authoritative and detailed account of the extent of the problem and possible solutions.

➤ **With increasing** urban growth and population density as well as environmental concerns, mass public transportation is quickly becoming the efficient and cost-effective, stress-free transportation mode of choice for many. The cover story in *Railway Age*, “Transit on the Move” [pp. 16-24. June, 2018. www.railwayage.com] features its annual 2018 Railway Passenger Railway Guide profiling numerous transportation projects implemented, under development, or in the planning stage.

➤ **“Managing 21st Century Political Risk”** is the title of an article written by Condoleezza Rice the former US Secretary of State and Amy Zegart. *Harvard Business Review*. [96(3):130-138. May-June 2018. www.hbr.org]. In today's interconnected world political risk is complicated as the geopolitical landscape is crowded and uncertain. The authors believe that the increasing complexity does not mean that you cannot prepare for unexpected problems. Rather, with effective risk management employing four core competencies it can be mitigated. In the article the authors outline the details of each competency and provide case studies that illustrate how organizations have successfully addressed real political threats in today's world.

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➤ **Advances in** biotechnology including back-breeding, cloning and genetic engineering are providing us with the capability to intervene or even create life and raise the possibility of returning extinct species to our planet. This is raising complex and important ethical issues and a subject of intense discussion by scientists and ethicists including: should we de-extinct a species? Which species should be re-created? What are the risks? David Schultz discusses these issues in a September 26, 2016 Science article “Should we bring extinct species back from the dead?” [www.sciencemag.org]. Many other informative articles continue to be published. Recently, (June, 2018) Chris Nelson discussed the issue in his Postmedia News article “Bringing Back Extinct Species Raises Ethical, Moral Issues.”

➤ **IEEE-USA INSIGHT** [insight.ieeeusa.org] is an online newsletter that provides timely, concise, informative and authoritative articles, essays and opinion pieces on the career and policy issues that are affecting the careers of IEEE members, as well as discussing issues influencing your career. Although focused on the United States experience the information is valuable to all readers helping them achieve personal, educational, and career success. A selection of recent articles include: Online Addiction, Emotions, Emojis and Other Email Essentials, Tips for Better Technical Writing, IT Careers Ripe for Transitioning to a Cybersecurity Role, and Legal Issues around Autonomous and Intelligent Systems. New articles are posted frequently.

➤ **Michael Risse** discusses how advanced analytics solutions provide improved simplified access to and accelerating access to solutions insights from big data. In his *InTech* article “What's Next for Big Data in Process Manufacturing” [65(3):10-15. May-June, 2018 www.isa.org], the author says that process engineers need to transition from spreadsheets to big data analytics, which will bring new

insights and improved production outcomes to manufacturing plants and organizations.

➤ **Paul Burns** has recently published the second edition of his book *New Venture Creation: A framework for entrepreneurial start-ups* [MacMillan 2018.]. This 480-page textbook sets out a systemic framework for creating a new venture by revealing the key steps and important considerations to guide you through the process of developing and launching a start-up. Importantly, the author (an entrepreneur himself) combines practical advice with new academic research that helps the reader understand what factors make companies successful. He discusses the challenges involved with both online and bricks-and-mortar businesses. Many case studies are provided that give you important insights from experienced entrepreneurs on the realities of running a business. ■

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About the Author

Terrance Malkinson is a communications specialist, business analyst and futurist. His career path includes technical supervisor and medical researcher at the University of Calgary, business proposal manager for the General Electric Company, and research administrator with the School of Health and Public Safety at SAIT Polytechnic in Calgary. He is currently an international correspondent for *IEEE-USA Today's Engineer*, contributing editor for *IEEE Canadian Review*, and a member of the editorial advisory board of *IEEE The Institute*. He was Vice-Chair of the IEEE-USA Communications Committee (2004-2010), and editor-in-chief of *IEEE-USA Today's Engineer Digest* (2004-2008). He was an elected Governor of the IEEE Engineering Management Society as well as past editor of *IEEE Engineering Management*. He is the author of more than 550 earned publications, and an accomplished triathlete. malkinst@telus.net