



AUTOMATION Perspectives

The real-world experiences of today's automation professionals.



How ISA Benefited My Career

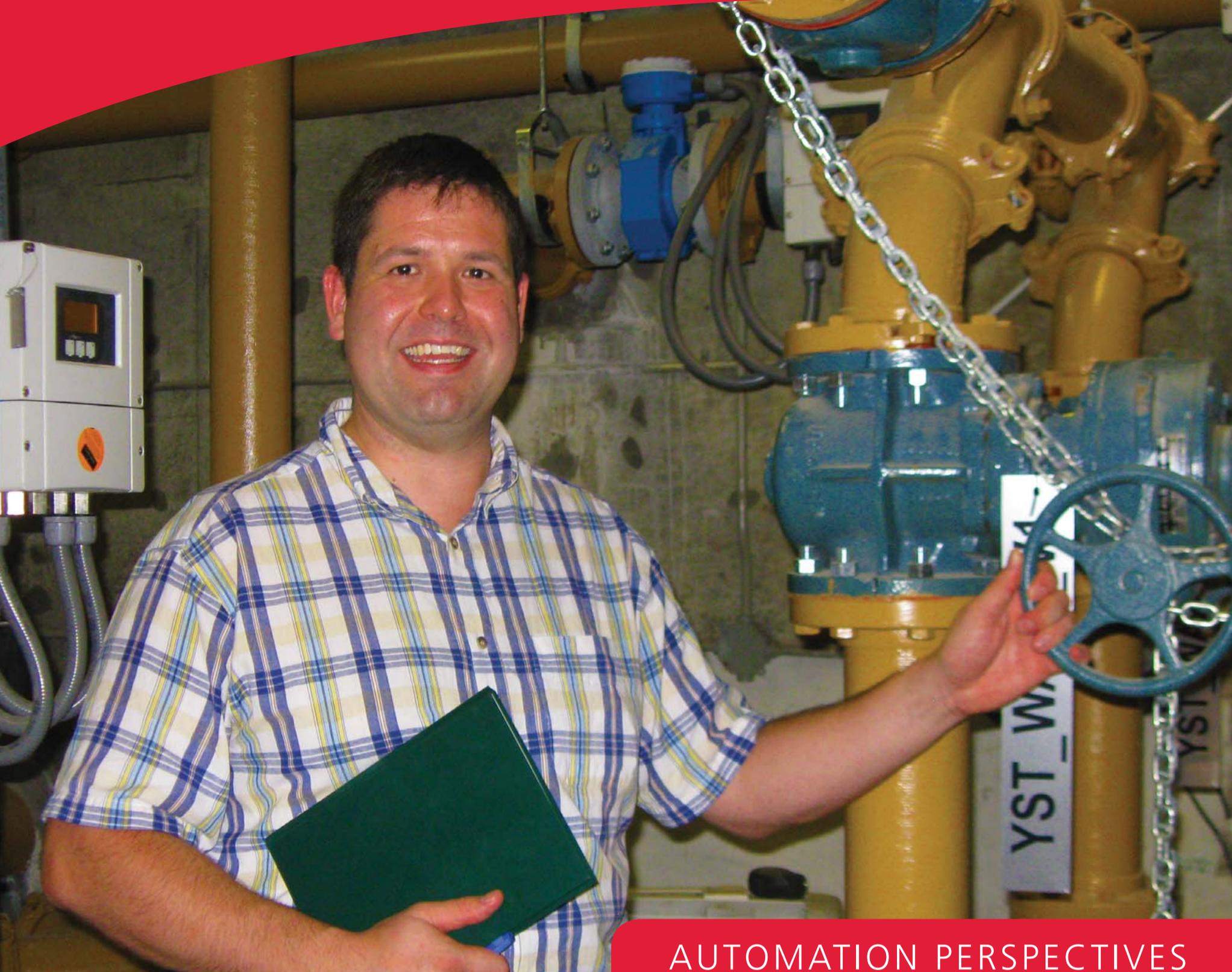
By Graham Nasby, P.E., PMP



FIRST Inspires and Educates Youth to Become Automation Professionals

By Bill Lydon





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ABOUT
THE
AUTHOR

I was asked to write a short article about the role ISA has played in my career. I can say that without question ISA membership and the many volunteer opportunities afforded by ISA have greatly shaped where I am today.



My ISA journey began in 2004 when I joined as a student member. In the following years, I made ample use of ISA's member resources to help me at the start of my career. From reading InTech articles and accessing ISA's many technical papers and standards, I was able to bring myself up to speed on current industry trends and techniques. It also helped me learn the proper jargon and terminology to use when speaking to others in my field—an important skill to learn that was not covered in school.

It was early 2009 when I started to become actively involved in ISA. At the time I was designing skidded process systems for the pharmaceutical industry and having trouble developing effective process alarms. Turns out I was not alone. Unbeknownst to me, at least until I read an InTech article about it, there was an ISA

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standards committee working on that very topic. Wanting to learn more, I soon joined the committee and so began my journey into ISA's committees and into various leadership opportunities.

Within ISA standards committees, I got the opportunity to work with technical leaders from some of the world's leading companies toward the common goal of producing documents to help guide automation-related best practices for our various sectors. It was refreshing, because I discovered that many of the technical issues I was having were in fact common issues, and there was much that could be learned from sharing experiences. Without my involvement in ISA committees, I would never have had the opportunity to work with and get to know these industry experts.

As a side effect of attending the twice-yearly face-to-face committee meetings, I also came to know ISA's many technical divisions, conferences, and geographic sections. In 2010 when the Great Recession reached Canada, and I had to change jobs



from the pharmaceutical to the municipal water/wastewater sector, my ISA membership and connections proved invaluable. In my new job, I was working in a completely different sector, which meant I now had new clients, new suppliers, and completely different types of automation and instrumentation.

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Through ISA's water/wastewater division, I was able to make new contacts in the industry, and through my local ISA section I got to know the local suppliers. To this day, the contacts I have made through ISA are one of my greatest resources.

ISA also has an inspiring effect when it comes to publishing papers and presenting at conferences. In 2011 I presented at my first international conference and have since then written dozens of articles for various industry publications. All of this began when a fellow ISA member suggested that publishing was a great way to stretch your brain, meet new people, and get noticed in our increasingly global marketplace. Turns out he was right. I now regularly hear from people who have read my articles and are looking for help with their facilities. As a consultant this is a major plus.

If you ever get a chance to take on a volunteer leadership position in ISA, I suggest you give it a try. From the various roles I have held in ISA standards committees, technical divisions, symposia, and local sections, I have learned a lot about how to work with people, strive toward technical excellence, and inspire those around me to achieve great things. ISA has played a major role in shaping my career, and I invite you to also get involved and reap the many benefits that ISA membership brings.

Tap here to view other articles written by Graham Nasby on SCADA, DCSs, P&ID, communications and more.

