

OSA Today

OPN has given a new look and a new name to its member news section. "OSA Today" provides you with profiles of the Society's leaders, information on meetings, and the latest news on awards, local sections, student chapters and OSA's journals. Look to "OSA Today" for all your Society news!

Assisting NIST

OSA Fellow Arthur Guenther has been appointed chair of the physics panel of the board of assessment of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). Guenther will begin the two-year position in 2005 after serving a one-year term as vice chair.

The panel oversees the technical program of NIST's physics laboratory, which supports U.S. industry by providing measurement



services and research for electronic, optical and radiation technologies.

Guenther has been an OSA member since 1958. He has served on several committees,

including the Education Council and the Public Policy Committee. In 2002, Guenther was awarded OSA's David Richardson Medal for his achievements in the study of laser-induced damage of optical materials. Guenther is a professor at the University of New Mexico.

— Susannah Lehman



OSA Welcomes Students in Atlanta ...

The OSA Student Chapter at Morehouse College in Atlanta is working to promote optics awareness through mentoring and tutoring programs.



... and in Bucharest

Student members of the OSA chapter at the University of Bucharest in Romania gathered at the end of the 2003 International Workshop on Optical Tweezers in the laboratory of chapter advisor Danut Adrian Cojoc.



San Francisco

Mark Your Calendars!

CLEO/IOEC 2004 and Photonic Applications, Systems and Technologies (PhAST)

May 16-21, San Francisco
Pre-registration deadline: April 19
Housing deadline: April 13
www.cleoconference.org

Nonlinear Optics (NLO) Topical Meeting

August 2-6, Waikoloa, Hawaii
Paper submission deadline: March 25, noon EST
www.osa.org/meetings/topicals/NLO

Biomedical Optics Topical Meeting

April 14-17, Miami
www.osa.org/meetings/topicals/BIOMED



Miami

New Editors

OSA welcomes to *Applied Optics/Information Processing* Abhijit Mahalanobis of Lockheed Martin, Orlando, Fla. (optical signal and image processing) and Markus Testorf of Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H. (Fourier optics and optical information processing); to *Optics Letters* Arnold Migus of the Institut d'Optique, Orsay, France (ultrafast optical phenomena) and William Firth of the

University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland (nonlinear optics); and to *JOSA A* Girish Saran Agarwal of the Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad, India (coherence and statistical optics), Franco Gori of Università degli Studi Roma Tre, Rome, (propagation and scattering), and Jiří Čtyrky of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (guided waves).

— Susannah Lehman

Who's Who on the OSA Board of Directors

Where are you from?

I was born and raised in Cairo, Egypt. I went to Cairo University, which is in Giza, not far from the great pyramids. My father was a pilot.

When did you first become interested in science?

I had a science teacher in high school who really was very impressive. He connected the various subjects—the microcosms of atoms with the macrocosms of planets, stars and galaxies—and tried to show the similarities of these two worlds.

Why optics?

Optics was an accident in my case. I wanted to study science in college, but it was more prestigious to go into engineering. When I went to the United States, I studied with an expert in quantum physics, Jan Minkowski at Johns Hopkins. He was a physicist with a deep understanding of quantum physics. I was pursuing a graduate degree in electrical engineering, and he directed me to the science of lasers and optics.

Describe a challenging experience in your life.

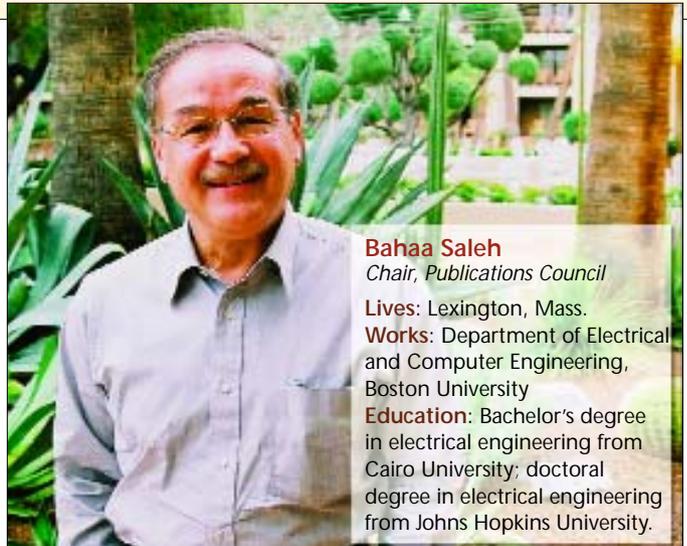
After graduate school, I wanted to stay in the United States, but it was not possible because of the rules on visas at that time. I also did not want to go home because of the political situation (early 1970s) in Egypt. This was also a time when the economy was so bad in the U.S. that there were no teaching positions. I had a friend who worked in the Brazilian consulate in Washington, D.C., who knew my dilemma. She told me that her country was looking for educated people

in the sciences to serve in teaching positions there. So I moved to a very pretty island called Florianópolis that is south of San Paulo. I became a professor of electrical engineering at the University of Santa Catarina.

It was there that I had to make a big decision. I could stay there and enjoy a very happy life in a paradise-like island with lots of fun and beaches and good food. But it was not possible to remain competitive in my science. There was a certain amount of isolation there. I happened to attend a technical meeting in Italy where I met some people doing similar research at the Max Planck Institute in Germany, and they found in me a person with the expertise to help them do their work. That helped me make my decision, and I moved to Germany.

What brought you back to the United States?

I started working on laser applications, and I spent about three years in Germany. I wrote my first book. And I came to a point where I wanted a more permanent position, so I immigrated to the United States. That was in 1977. At that point, I wanted to apply my knowledge of optics to a significantly different field, and I decided I wanted to study vision. I looked for the best school in vision, and I decided upon the School of Optometry at the University of California, Berkeley. I spent less than a year there before I went to the place that would become my home for 17 years, the University of Wisconsin at Madison. I became a U.S. citizen in 1980.



Bahaa Saleh
Chair, Publications Council

Lives: Lexington, Mass.

Works: Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Boston University

Education: Bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Cairo University; doctoral degree in electrical engineering from Johns Hopkins University.

Why did you become active in OSA?

I owe this to Joseph Goodman. When I was at Berkeley, he was at Stanford. I knew his books and respected his writings very much. I visited him at Stanford and gave him a copy of my book, *Photoelectron Statistics*. At that time, he was writing a book on statistical optics. He apparently appreciated my work. When he was editor of JOSA A, he asked me to serve as assistant editor for coherence and statistical optics, and that put me into the leadership track of OSA. I spent a number of years as an assistant editor, then a topical editor, then editor of JOSA A, then chair of the Board of Editors and now, chair of the Publications Council. I enjoy this because it puts me at the forefront of advances in science, and it has broadened my scope of interest in all fields of optics.

When you're not working, what do you enjoy doing?

I think many of the people you interview for these profiles will say that when we're not working, we are working! My teaching and research profession does occupy most of my time; I think of myself as a teacher before anything

else. But I do enjoy gardening and landscaping. We built a new house in Lexington, and I landscaped it, which was difficult because it is in wetlands. I love Brazilian music; it fills me with nostalgia.

What should the Society be focusing on?

The Society has struggled with its identity for a while. I supported the proposed merger between OSA and SPIE, in part because I believe the Society should integrate the communities of scientists and engineers. Nevertheless, I had an open mind about it. The most important thing for OSA is to keep up with advances in technology and not miss a sudden turn in a new direction. When the laser was invented, it was a technology looking for an application, and the Society took an interest only after the technology flourished. We also must keep in mind that OSA is becoming a truly international Society. I would be inclined to support the renaming of the Society to the International Optical Society. Our Society should not be bound by any one country any more than it should be bound by a narrow scope of optics and photonics.

— Kim Douglass