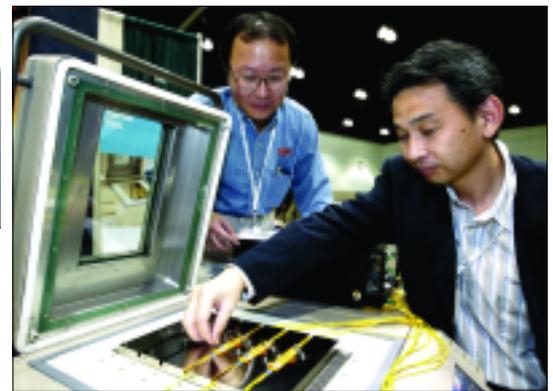


OSA Today



OFC 2004 was held in Los Angeles. Next year, the combined OFC/NFOEC event will take place in Anaheim, Calif.



OFC Merges With NFOEC

The managers of the Optical Fiber Communication Conference and Exposition (OFC) and the National Fiber Optic Engineers Conference (NFOEC) have announced plans to combine the two events into one conference and trade show. The first such event will take place next year, March 6-11, at the Anaheim Convention Center in Anaheim, Calif.

Telcordia Technologies has turned over assets and management of NFOEC to OFC. The combined OFC/NFOEC event will provide attendees and exhibiting companies with the communications industry's most comprehensive view of optical technology in terms of the latest research breakthroughs as well as commercial products and services. The stand-alone NFOEC meeting, originally planned for September 12-16 in Anaheim, will not be held.

OFC is managed by OSA and co-sponsored by OSA, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers/Communications Society (IEEE/ComSoc) and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers/Lasers and Electro-Optics Society (IEEE/LEOS).

"Both OFC and NFOEC have long been leaders in serving the research,

engineering and application communities in the communications industry," said Elizabeth A. Rogan, OSA's executive director. "By joining our efforts and areas of expertise, this combined event will offer enhanced programming for the benefit of our attendees and will deliver a greater concentration of customers in one location, which is a terrific opportunity for our exhibitors."

"In its early years, NFOEC's primary audience was the Regional Bell Operating Companies," said David Arbach of Telcordia Technologies. "While continuing to serve the needs of network carriers, over the years the conference has greatly expanded its reach to become an international event serving CLECs (competitive local exchange carriers), long-distance carriers and the broad range of facilities-based network operators. We believe that the combined event is an important next step in the expansion of NFOEC's reach and is consistent with the evolution of the communications industry."

The success of the OFC/NFOEC merger will hinge on two key traits, according to industry analyst Chris Nicoll of Current Analysis: uncommon focus and adaptability.

"The merger of OFC and NFOEC gives the combined organization an opportunity to showcase optics and optical technologies end-to-end without attendees having to wade through technologies, products and companies they are not interested in to a depth they may not be accustomed to," Nicoll said.

In today's economic climate, fewer participants are attending fewer shows, Nicoll said. "Even as the market and economy improve, it should not be expected that the industry will return to the time where trade shows were sometimes thinly veiled excuses to delve into the expense account. Business today requires focus and adaptability. OFC/ NFOEC brings together two key forces in the optics industry, creating the keystone event of the year that will be worth a look in 2005."

Registration for the combined event opens Nov. 1. For more information on OFC/NFOEC 2005, visit <http://www.ofconference.org>.

— Colleen Morrison

Who's Who on OSA's Board of Directors

Where are you from?

I grew up in a small conservative town about 40 minutes southwest of Boston, called Westwood, Mass. My parents both were real estate brokers. I was definitely a girly-girl; I loved long dresses and makeup and my mom's high-heeled shoes. But I was also unconventional as a girl in that I still wanted to catch frogs, fish and climb trees with my brothers.

When did you become interested in science?

My mother's dad was a chemist. He worked in textiles for Natick Laboratories, treating Army fatigues to make them moisture resistant. He also was very musical; he had his own jazz band, and he played every instrument imaginable. I think my love of science and music came from him; I wanted to be just like my grandfather. I was a drummer, and I took as many music classes as I could. I was also very good at math and science, and in high school I decided I would go to college to become a doctor.

Why optics?

Two things happened when I arrived at Rochester: I discovered that it was not as easy to get good grades in college as it been for me in high school. And I discovered that I couldn't stand the sight of blood. I decided it probably was good for society that I change my career path! I had a girlfriend on my hall who was in optics, and she liked a lot of the same things I did. She encouraged me to give optics a try. My first class in the subject was geometrical optics, and I liked it a lot.

I thought the process of manipulating light was really cool.

Describe a challenging experience related to your work in optics.

One of the hardest parts of being in optics was that I didn't get good grades. An undergraduate science professor discouraged me from going further in optics and told me that I should consider doing something else. I took that as a challenge. I said, "I'm going to prove you wrong, because I have value." I had the same issue that I think a lot of women do, in that I was afraid to ask questions in class. I didn't want to look stupid. After I graduated, my first job was at a place called ITEK, where we worked in space-based optics. I really had a good experience there. My mentor was a woman, and she told me that grades aren't everything. She said it's what you do with your knowledge that's important. I did very well there, and this helped me see that I could be capable in optics.

I think the other challenge has been just proving myself in the industry. In the field of coatings, a lot of the engineers are older men. They would refer to me as "little girl." To prove my abilities, my boss gave me a multi-mode mirror design assignment. The single design must easily adapt to rejecting different laser wavelengths on different optics within the system. My boss had given this project to three engineers, and they hadn't been able to solve it. I solved it in a day. When I gave it to the older technicians, they said it

Jennifer D. Traylor Kruschwitz

Chair, Member and Education Services Council



Lives: Rochester, N.Y.

Works: Consultant specialized in optical coatings

Education: Bachelor's and master's degrees in optics, University of Rochester

Family (pictured): Husband, Brian; daughter, Helen; son, Adam.

was too simple an answer. But then it came out in the very first run. They didn't call me "little girl" anymore.

Whom do you most admire?

I call them "The Coatings Dream Team": the late Phil Baumeister, George Dobrowolski, Angus McLeod, Alfred Thelen and Alexander Tikhonravov. They are pioneers in the field of coatings. The thing I most admire about them is that they are a resource to talk out problems and issues; they have been very welcoming to me.

Where is your favorite place?

Dennis, Mass., which is right on the bicep of Cape Cod. I have gone there in the summers since I was very small.

If you could try any another career, what would it be?

I would be a fashion designer. I used to make wedding dresses for extra money in college, so I'd like to be someone like Vera Wang. I work in optical coatings, and designing coatings is very similar to making a pattern for a dress. You're putting pieces together to solve a problem.

What are you proudest of?

My children are my greatest achievement. I am very fortunate

in that I am able to work from home so that I can spend time with them. I am also extremely proud of my husband, who's also in optics. He is just so darned smart!

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

Home improvement. It took us five years, but we renovated our bathroom all on our own. I'm building a patio now. I also love designing and painting the children's rooms.

What should the Society be focusing on in the 21st century?

I am so proud of OSA and its outreach to students. We need to get students connected so that they will want to make OSA their society for life. We have to help them see the value in maintaining their membership. One of the other things I am concerned about is that we are putting more and more emphasis on topical meetings. I used to love the annual meeting because it was a kind of homecoming and also I could go hear a range of papers on topics that I could relate to. I don't feel that way anymore, and I know that's true for people in other areas. The meetings need to be more inclusive.

— Kim Douglass