OSA Today

Help a Colleague

A new program offered through the OSA Foundation gives OSA members the opportunity to assist scientists from developing countries by paying their annual membership fees. It costs $40 to sponsor a regular member and $15 to sponsor a student member.

Among those who have benefited from the program is Imrana Ashraf Zahid, an associate professor in the Department of Physics at Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad, Pakistan. "There are limited funds for education and quite less for research journals," Zahid said. "So in these circumstances, being an OSA member, I can access online journals of my field of interest and enjoy the free subscriptions of *Optics & Photonics News* and *Physics Today*. In addition to this, I am getting information about many scientific conferences, meetings and short courses."

Kim Douglass

Imrana Ashraf Zahid is associate professor of physics at Quaid-i-Azam University in Pakistan. She is among those benefiting from OSA's new membership sponsorship program.

Members can sign up for the program on their 2004 renewal forms. A list of developing countries is available at www.osa.org/join/benefits/econ. Questions? Write the OSA Foundation at foundation@osa.org or go to www.osa.org/foundation.

— *Susannah Lehman*

Getting Heard on Capitol Hill

Members and staff of OSA and SPIE (The International Society for Optical Engineering) visited Capitol Hill in March as part of Congressional Visits Day to stress the importance of federal funding for research and development. OSA has been participating in this annual event since 1999. For information about participating in future Congressional Visits Days, go to www.osa.org/publicpolicy/congressional_visits_days/.

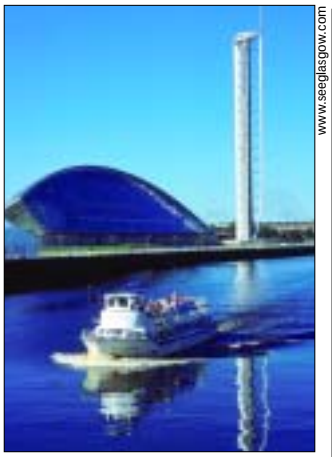
A New System for Manuscripts

This spring, OSA will launch its new Web-based journal program, the All-Digital-System (ADS). The system manages the manuscript processes for OSA's print and electronic journals, from submission to publication.

Authors can submit and track their manuscripts and pay for reprint orders and publication charges online. Reviewers and editors can access a full PDF of their assigned manuscripts. Reviews can be submitted online and editors will have the ability to assign reviewers and send decisions as well as see all the pertinent manuscript information.

If you have a question about the new system, please e-mail Kelly Cohen (kcohen@osa.org) in OSA's manuscripts office.

— *Susannah Lehman*



www.seeglasgow.com

Photon 04

OSA President Peter Knight will give a plenary lecture at Photon 04, scheduled for September in Glasgow, Scotland. Hosted by the U.K. Consortium for Photonics & Optics, the event is aimed at the entire photonics community. Featured will be sessions on quantum information, optical tweezers, biophotonics and environmental optics, as well as optics in manufacturing.

At the center of the meeting will be the conferences of the Institute of Physics: Optics and Photonics 2004 and QEP-16 (Quantum Electronics and Photonics). This is the first time the conferences are being held together. For more information, visit www.photon04.org.

— *Susannah Lehman*

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Optical Amplifiers and Their Applications/ Integrated Photonics
June 27-July 2
San Francisco
Hotel deadline: May 27
Advance registration deadline: June 1
Post-deadline papers: Noon, June 21
www.osa.org/oaa

Photon Correlation and Scattering
August 16-18, Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences (KNAW)
Amsterdam,
The Netherlands
New extended deadline: Noon, May 16
www.osa.org/pcs

Who's Who on OSA's Board of Directors

Ursula Gibson
Director-at-large
Lives: Etna, N.H.
Works: Associate professor of engineering, Dartmouth College
Education: Bachelor's degree in physics from Dartmouth College; master's and doctoral degrees in physics from Cornell University

Where are you from?

I was born in Sheffield, England, and I lived there for eight years. I remember a few things: the neighborhood, the school and whose raspberry patch came ripe first. We came to the U.S. with my father as part of the "brain drain," when many scientists from Europe came to the U.S. in the late 1950s and early 1960s. When we came here, we first lived in Philadelphia, and then moved to Ithaca, N.Y., when I was in the sixth grade. I was in Ithaca through high school, so that's really where I "grew up."

When did you first become interested in science?

My parents were scientists, so I may have been genetically predisposed to the field. I found math and science pretty interesting all the way through high school. If there was a defining moment, it was shortly after I graduated from high school. I had asked for a stereo system as a graduation present, and to my chagrin, my dad gave me a Heathkit. Putting it together plunged me into something I had never tried before, and I was amazed and pleased that I could build something sophisticated and have it work.

Why optics?

I'm a little bit like a crow; I'm attracted to anything that sparkles and is colorful. But the journey really started when I took the placement exam for physics my first week at college, and I got into the advanced sequence. It was tough at the start, but by the end of the year, I was really having fun with it. I spent the summer after undergraduate school at Bell Labs working with Erich Ippen, freezing fluorophores into organic glasses and looking at the spectra. At Cornell, I joined Bob Buhrman's group and did a project in photothermal conversion, and that's when my education became firmly related to optics. A position at the University of Arizona's Optical Sciences Center put me in the middle of a dynamic optics community and cemented the connection. And now I get paid to make things that are colorful and sparkly!

Describe a challenging career experience.

Taking the faculty position at (Arizona's) Optical Sciences Center right out of graduate school was a challenge. The options had been either to work for a large company close to home or try a faculty position on the other side of the country. The industrial salary was higher, they were offering a permanent position and it was a location I was familiar with. But it felt like settling into middle age at 27, and I just wasn't ready for that kind of stability. So off I launched into the desert. Arizona was a really great place to work; there are so many bright people there. But without a doubt it was the toughest thing I've done—making the overnight leap from graduate student to faculty member. I had never written a proposal, set up a lab or hired anyone, much less worried about a budget. I had no boss and little idea of where to start. I remember settling into my new office, putting my books on the shelf, then looking at my bare desk and thinking, "Now what?"

Where is your favorite place?

Either Aruba or Etna, N.H. I'm a windsurfer, and Aruba is the place we often go to sail; it's relaxed and familiar. The village in which we live, Etna, is also right up there among my favorite places; it's beautiful and the postmaster knows everyone's name.

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

I'd like to be an astronaut. It would be an adventure, and it's a diverse job, including everything from survival training to machine-man interactions to public speaking. As an astronaut you would be well-placed to encourage young people to pursue science. Last but not least, there are those magnificent blue flight suits they wear.

What are you proudest of?

Not that I can take full credit for them, but I'm proudest of my kids. I have two boys, 15 and 9, and a 13-year-old daughter. They are nice people.

When you're not working (or wind surfing), what do you enjoy doing?

My husband plays classical guitar, and when the children aren't within earshot, we play recorder-guitar duets. I like to ride bicycles, play ice hockey and fly zippy airplanes.

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

Science education is critical. We need to foster enthusiasm for science in students at all levels to create a large pool from which the next generation of scientists will emerge. It's likely that a person who has a career in optics started by being excited by science in general. The Society also needs to establish pathways to respond to many different applications of optics and to respond flexibly to new fields as they emerge.

— Kim Douglass