

## Latin American Researchers Express Gratitude to ICTP

It was a pleasure to read “Peace Through Science,” the recent article by Kim Douglass which described the role that the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) has played in promoting education and research activities in optics in developing countries (August 2004). I am writing to call attention to additional important contributions made by ICTP and Gallieno Denardo.

Although as the article points out, ICTP has most recently focused on people in developing nations in Africa, it has a long history of working with Latin American researchers in the achievement of fruitful careers in optics. These activities can be traced back at least as far as the ICTP Laser Spectroscopy Colleges in the early 1980s, which brought together many young researchers from Latin American countries. These researchers met in Trieste at a time when South-South collaboration was highly unusual. While in Trieste, Eddien Alvarez from Colombia and Carlos Massone, an Argentinean working in Brazil, conceived of a Latin American Meeting on Lasers. The first of these meetings was hosted by Colombia in 1984, where Abdus Salam called for the creation of the International Center of Physics (CIF). With the support of ICTP, CIF organized events that were attended by optics researchers from Latin American countries and, even after the unfortunate death of Eddien Alvarez, worked jointly with CLAF (Centro Latinoamericano de Física) to promote the organization of more Latin American meetings on optics (Brazil, 1986; Argentina, 1988; Mexico, 1993).

Meanwhile, the ICTP series of schools on optical fiber communications, initiated in the 1980s, gave participants from Latin America a “real-world” understanding of the technology at a time when fiber systems were being installed throughout the region. The series also helped in the establishment of new links between researchers throughout South and Central America and opened the



Latin-American optics research community thanked the ICTP, and Professor Denardo in particular, for their strong and continuing support over the course of more than two decades.

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way to mutual collaborations, which which were further encouraged by ICTP through the Multipurpose Optical Network based at CIOP in Argentina. Professor Denardo’s interest in industrial applications of lasers resulted in five international courses, workshops and seminars coordinated by Spero Morato in 1997 and 1998, in Brazil, Peru and Argentina.

Independent of these activities, in 1992 Spanish researchers and educators started a series of Iberian-American meetings on optics (RIOA). In 1995, RIOA II was held in Mexico and OPTILAS was held in Cuba. To avoid scheduling conflicts, the two series of meetings were combined, with RIOA-OPTILAS being held in Colombia in the fall of 1998. Again ICTP, through Gallieno Denardo, played an important role, not only by providing financial support but also by establishing a stronger link between the Latin American and international communities through the International Commission on Optics (ICO). It was at this time that OSA and SPIE both became involved in supporting Iberian-American activities in optics. This October, RIOA-OPTILAS 2004 was held in Margarita, Venezuela. More than 400 papers were presented. During the course of the event, the

## Holography’s Pioneers

I was bothered by Sean Johnston’s recent article on the work of Stephen Benton (August 2004), which damned with faint praise, if any praise was indeed given, to the work of Emmett Leith and Juris Upatnieks.

I remember that period of discovery well, and the excitement that followed the demonstration by that pair of then quite young men who put into practice the theoretical vision of Dennis Gabor. As I recall, Leith and Upatnieks’ demonstration was published by Professor George Stroke without attribution. There followed an investigation by Dean Ralph Sawyer, which culminated in Professor Stroke’s decision to leave the University of Michigan.

Somehow or other, those two men, at the time employed by the very progressive radar laboratory of the University of Michigan, never did receive very much credit for their insightful pioneering. Their innovative work was published as if it had been accomplished by another. Recognition came considerably later.

It is time that due credit is given where true credit is long overdue.

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## Letters to the Editor

Please direct all correspondence to the Editor, *Optics & Photonics News*, The Optical Society, 2010 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-1023. E-mail: [opn@osa.org](mailto:opn@osa.org). Please be sure to include your name, address and daytime telephone number on all correspondence, including e-mail. Letters may be edited for clarity or length requirements.

**Sean Johnston responds:**

Lucien Biberman is correct in stating that credit for work in holography has been unevenly distributed over the decades. However, the Stephen Benton article<sup>1</sup> was an interview focusing on his own career, and, in his own words, only briefly contrasted his work and environment with that of others. I have focused on the seminal Leith-Upatnieks research at Willow Run, Mich., in two recent articles,<sup>2,3</sup> and on George Stroke in another,<sup>4</sup> but much remains to be told about the development of the subject. Several thousand scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs, artisans and artists have contributed to the field, a few hundred of whom I hope to discuss in a forthcoming book on the history of holography and holographers.

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## References

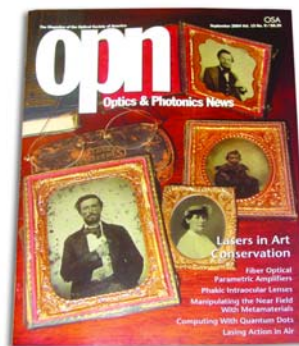
1. S. F. Johnston, *Opt. Photon. News*, **15** (8), 32-5 (2004).
2. S. F. Johnston, *Opt. Photon. News*, **15** (7), 36-41 (2004).
3. S. F. Johnston, "Shifting perspectives: holography and the emergence of technical communities," *Technology & Culture* **46** (forthcoming, Jan. 2005).
4. S. F. Johnston, "Telling Tales: George Stroke and the Historiography of Holography," *History and Technology* **20**, 29-51 (2004).

**The Fabrication of Daguerreotypes**

There is a small but important omission in the description of the daguerreotype on page 18 of the article, "Lasers and the Fine Art of Art Conservation," (September 2004): "A daguerreotype is an image exposed on a mirror-polished copper plate in a box camera. The plate was sensitized with iodine ... ." The copper plate was merely

the substrate for a polished layer of silver on the surface of the copper. The light-sensitive surface was then a layer of silver iodide created by exposing the plate to iodine vapor. The silver sulfide tarnish forms on and from the silver remaining on the finished daguerreotype. Interested readers are encouraged to refer to the publications listed below for more information.

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## References

1. R. Taft, "Photography and the American Scene," p. 6, Macmillan, New York, 1942.
2. R.V. Jenkins, "Images and Enterprise," p. 10, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1975.
3. A more complete contemporary [1839] description of the process can be found in Newhall, Beaumont, "The History of Photography," pp. 20-1, The Museum of Modern Art, 1949.