SPIE's 40th Anniversary

Yes indeed, SPIE—The International Society for Optical Engineering—was founded 40 years ago this year. As the official records show, it was “on July 1, 1955 that some 50 persons met at The House of Murphy restaurant on Ventura Boulevard in Studio City, California, to begin the formation of a new society which was soon to become SPIE.” I refer the reader to the booklet published in July 1995 entitled “SPIE's 40th Anniversary: Forty years of helping the optical community turn technology into reality.” There is also an interesting video that has been put together that chronicles the early years of the society.

Naturally, SPIE's International Symposium on Optical Science, Engineering, and Instrumentation celebrated this 40th anniversary with an outstanding meeting in San Diego. Some 5750 people attended the 61 topical technical conferences, the 86 educational courses, and the three-day exhibit with more than 1100 exhibitors. It was my great personal privilege to be the chair of this 1995 anniversary symposium. This is the largest San Diego symposium since 1992.

Special events at the meeting outside the technical program involved a number of social occasions highlighted by the 40th Annual Awards Banquet and Dinner Dance, at which time I had the honor of welcoming the diners and introducing Jack Gaskill, 1995 President of SPIE, who, with the help of President-Elect Henri Arsenault, presented the awards to a group of very deserving students, scientists, and engineers. Included in that awards ceremony was the presentation of the Kingslake Medal and Prize to Jose Sasian for his paper in *Optical Engineering* that was judged the best paper of the journal year 1994 (see my last editorial for the details).

On the occasion of this very special awards banquet, I wore a tie that I had received in England in 1993, when I had

the good fortune to attend the celebration of the 800th anniversary of the founding of the City of Lancaster. The tie has the city coat-of-arms and underneath it is written “1183–1993.” I thought that it would keep us all humble and thinking about the future, since SPIE is still a very young 40 years old.

Another special event was the Members and Founders Reception that was followed by the Quarter Century Anniversary Dinner for all members who have been in the society for 25 years or more. A great evening was had by all. I certainly was not a founder but have been involved with the society since 1963.

The Annual Meeting has been held in San Diego for the last 22 years. All participants enjoy San Diego as a location for our meeting, since there is so much to enjoy in the finite and rather limited spare time that a busy technical program and exhibit allow. As you may have already heard, we have been forced to relocate our meeting for the 41st International Symposium because of a national political convention. The City of Denver will be our host next year from August 4th to 9th.

Editor's Anecdote

This is really a symposium chair's anecdote. I was walking through the registration area on Monday morning when one of the local red-jacketed attendants stopped me and said “It is you, isn't it?” Before I could think of a quick rejoinder and a “yes, it is me, myself, and I,” he opened up the technical program, pointed to my photograph, and said “yes, it is!”

Brian J. Thompson
Editor

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Optical Remote Sensing and Image Processing

Mohammad A. Karim
Bradley D. Duncan
University of Dayton
Center for Electro-Optics
300 College Park
Dayton, OH 45469-0227
513/229-2241 • 513/229-3177
513/229-2471 FAX

December 1995

Optics in Polymer Science and Technology

Maksymilian Pluta
Institute of Applied Optics
Kamionkowska 18
03-805 Warsaw, Poland
(4822) 184405 • (4822) 133265 FAX

Andrzej Wasiak
Institute of Fundamental Technological
Research
Polish Academy of Sciences
Savietokrzyska 21
00-012 Warsaw, Poland
(4822) 269815 FAX

January 1996

Optical Science and Engineering in Argentina

Guillermo H. Kaufmann
Universidad Nacional de Rosario
Instituto de Fisica Rosario
Applied Optics Group
Bv. 27 de Febrero 210 bis
2000 Rosario
Argentina
E-mail: guille@ifir.edu.ar
or gkaufman@arosario.bitnet
54 41 825838 • 54 41 257164 FAX

Visual Communications and Image Processing

Cheng-Tie Chen
Bellcore, NVC 3X-321
331 Newman Springs Road
Red Bank, NJ 07701
908/758-3106 • 908/758-4371 FAX
E-mail: ctc@nyquist.bellcore.com

Kou-Hu Tzou
COMSAT Laboratories
22300 Comsat Drive
Clarksburg, MD 20871
301/428-4663 • 301/428-9287 FAX
E-mail: kouhu@ctd.comsat.com

Ya-Qin Zhang
David Sarnoff Research Center
201 Washington Road
Princeton, NJ 08543-5300
609/734-2095 • 609/734-2049 FAX
E-mail: zhang@earth.sarnoff.com

February 1996

Optical Engineering in Small Companies

Xiangyang Yang
University of New Orleans
Department of Electrical Engineering
New Orleans, LA 70148
504/286-5524 • 504/286-3950
E-mail: xxyee@uno.edu

William J. Miceli
Office of Naval Research
800 North Quincy Street
Arlington, VA 22217-5000
703/696-5752 • 703/696-1330 FAX

March 1996

Sensor Fusion

Belur V. Dasarathy
Dynamics, Inc.
P.O. Box Drawer B
Huntsville, AL 35814-5050
205/922-9230 ext. 355 • 205/922-9219 or
205/922-9260 FAX
E-mail: belur@dynetics.com

May 1996

Optical Engineering in Romania

Adrian Podoleanu
University of Kent at Canterbury
Physics Laboratory
Kent CT2 7NR
United Kingdom
0227 764000 • 0227 475423 FAX
E-mail: ap11@ukc.ac.uk

June 1 1996

Electronic Holography

Chung J. Kuo
National Chung Cheng University
Department of Electrical Engineering
Chiayi, Taiwan 62107
886 5 272 0862 FAX
E-mail: kuo@ee.ccu.edu.tw

Manuscripts due Nov. 1, 1995

July 1996

Optical Security

Joseph L. Horner
Rome Laboratory
Department of the Air Force
Hanscom AFB, MA 01731
617/377-3841 • 617/377-2836 FAX
E-mail: horner@eastlouex.rl.af.mil

Bahram Javidi
University of Connecticut
Electrical and Systems Engineering Department
U-157, Room 312, Eng. III
260 Glenbrook Road
Storrs, CT 06269
203/486-2867 • 203/486-0318 FAX
E-mail: bahram@eng2.uconn.edu

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Applications of Neural Networks in Optics

Suganda Jutamulia
Kowa Company, Ltd.
100 Century Center Court
Suite 302
San Jose, CA 95112-4512
408/441-9300 • 408/441-0537 FAX

Francis T. S. Yu
The Pennsylvania State University
Electrical and Computer Engineering
Department
216 Electrical Engineering East
University Park, PA 16802
814/863-2989 • 814/865-7065 FAX
E-mail: dapece@engr.psu.edu

Toshimitsu Asakura
Hokkaido University
Research Institute for Electronic Science
Kita 12, Nishi-6
Kita-ku, Sapporo 060
Japan
81 11 7162111 ext. 2877 • 81 11 7583173 FAX
E-mail: asakura@hikari.hokudai.ac.jp

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