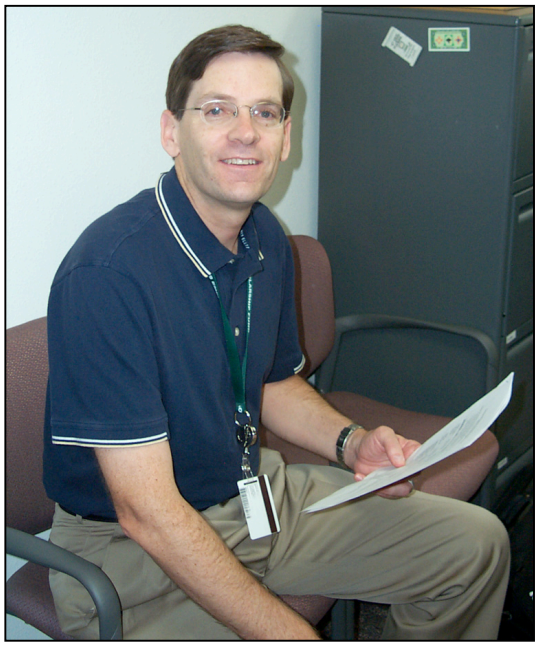
STB News

Happy Holidays — December 2003



Kurt Steinhaus, former head of STB-EPO

Governor appoints Steinhaus as Deputy Secretary of Education

Kurt Steinhaus, former team leader of the Education Program Office (EPO), is now New Mexico's deputy secretary of education.

Steinhaus left EPO right after Thanksgiving. Allen Hartford, leader of Science and Technology Base Programs, subsequently appointed **Min Park** as interim head of EPO until a formal, permanent selection can be made. Park will be assisted on a part-time basis by **Dennis Gill**, retired former head of EPO.

It's been an exciting year for Steinhaus. In midsummer, he was appointed as Gov. Bill Richardson's education policy advisor. In an interview with STB News in July, he said he would be devoting 25 percent of his time to the advisory post. "I'm going to assist the governor with the transition to a cabinet secretary of education," he said.

Subsequently, the voters approved Richardson's proposal, and shortly afterward, news stories began appearing that listed Steinhaus himself as one of the finalists for the cabinet post. When the appointment was announced on Nov. 14, the top job went to former Santa Fe Public Schools Superintendent Veronica Garcia—but Steinhaus got the deputy position.

Asked about the discussion that led up to the appointment, Steinhaus said, "The governor called me into his office and said he'd like to talk to me." Richardson asked his aides to leave the room, Steinhaus said, and then he "explained his thinking and what he wanted me to do."

Steinhaus told Richardson that he wanted to discuss the offer with his wife, Jo Beth, and take 24 hours to think it over. The governor pointed to a telephone and said, "Call her."

When Steinhaus got his wife on the telephone, Richardson asked to talk to her too. "He was impressed with her," Steinhaus said, and confided later that her candor reminded him of his own wife.

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STB-LDRD Has Added Two New Employees

You may have seen them in the hallway and wondered who they are….

Laboratory Directed Research and Development (LDRD) has two new employees, **Jeremy Forman and Nancy Rodarte**. Both have cubicles in Room 123.

Forman, an employee of Comforce Technical Services, Inc., specializes in computer programming and database administration.

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NEW PEOPLE (Cont'd from p.1)

Jeremy Forman at his desk in STB-LDRD

Nancy Rodarte at her terminal

He worked at the New Mexico Department of Transportation for two and a half years before joining the Laboratory Dec. 1. He has two bachelor's degrees—one in university studies from the University of New Mexico, and a second in computer science from the College of Santa Fe. He also has a degree from New England Culinary Institute. He said he is "classically trained as a French chef," but he loves to make full-scale meals for family occasions such as Thanksgiving.

He and his wife Bernadette have two children: Oliver, 5, and Madison, 2. They live in Santa Fe.

Asked how he likes his job, he said, "It's great so far. I like the work, and I like the group." He described his colleagues as "very professional and nice."

Rodarte, who is with the Plus Group, joined LDRD in August. Before hiring on to work at the Laboratory, she was with Weirich and Associates for about 18 months, working in the Department of Energy Los Alamos Area Office.

She lives in Española with her two sons, Bobby, 17, and Brandon, 15, both students at Pojoaque High School.

In her "spare time," she is working toward a degree in human services at Northern New Mexico Community College in Española. She said she has "about a year and a half to go."

STEINHAUS (Cont'd from p.1.)

Steinhaus took the 24 hours to think—and then said yes. He knew several days before the formal announcement that he had the deputy secretary position.

This won't be his first experience with the state. Before joining Los Alamos National Laboratory, he spent 11 years working for the State Education Department as division director for accountability and information services. He was chief information officer for the division from 1988 to 1999.

Steinhaus also has an educational background that should be valuable in his new job. He holds one master's degree in computer science from the University of Oregon and another in music (French horn) from Eastern New Mexico University. His doctoral degree in "educational leadership and organizational learning" is from the University of New Mexico—and Garcia, the new secretary of education, has the same degree and was one of his classmates at UNM.

In addition, when Garcia was superintendent in Santa Fe, Steinhaus' wife was a sixth grade teacher in the Santa Fe system, and Steinhaus had children in the Santa Fe schools. (Steinhaus' son Kent is a senior at Santa Fe High School this year, and his daughter, Valerie, is a sophomore at the University of New Mexico, majoring in computer science and Portuguese.)

Steinhaus said he feels good about working for Garcia. He knows her well and respects her.

Asked what his goal will be as deputy secretary of education, he said, "I'd like to be part of the solution for improving education in New Mexico."

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STB's Artists Create Beauty and Interest in a Variety of Ways

Science and Technology Base Programs (STB) may have "science" in its name, but it has artists in its midst.

Batik

Gloria Sharp at LA Science

Take, for example, **Gloria Sharp**, an IM-1 employee who has been the art director for STB's Los Alamos Science for about 15 years. She has been creating batik works of art for more than 30 years. Her work has been displayed at Andrews Gallery, in numerous shows at the Los Alamos Art Center, and at her home.

In a summary that she often provides with her work, she explains that batik is a method of dying complex designs onto fabric. A dye-resistant material (a "resist") covers portions of the fabric that the artist doesn't intend to dye.

"A long time ago," she wrote, "I came upon a small pamphlet that launched my lifelong interest in batik—an art form practiced by craftspeople on the Island of Java. Using wax and indigo dyes, they created elaborately patterned fabric for clothing. I was encouraged to try it in spite of the limited materials available at the time, and after locating an old fondue pot and hot plate for melting wax, a rainbow assortment of household dyes purchased at the grocery store, and several worn muslin sheets, I was enthusiastically on my way….

"Over the years, my work has taken numerous directions. It has been clothing, sculpture, wall hangings, and collage. Throughout, I have discovered batik's limitless possibilities.

"Nowadays, the fabric arts are supported by the availability of sophisticated, reliable, and innovative materials like fiber-reactive dyes that are so colorfast that they do not react to bleach, and 'resists' that are safe and versatile. It is possible to be quite painterly in this medium, and that is the direction I have finally chosen for my work."

When she first began doing batik, Sharp said in a recent interview, she was an art teacher in elementary schools in Pittsburg. She still remembers with delight how she found fabrics at "the remnant counter of the big department stores." She recalls the "lovely smell" of beeswax, and the delight of coming to the end of the school year and knowing that she could spend the entire summer on her art.

The technology of her art has changed over the years. She still starts with a basic drawing on white fabric made from untreated fibers. (She cannot use permanent press materials.) She especially likes linen and "really hard cotton."

But, she said, "I now use a resist that is water soluble." "Presist," as the resist is called, is made by fabric art companies that developed it for safety. She applies it, leaves it to dry, and only then paints on dye and lets it dry. She repeats this process layer after layer, going from light colors to darker colors.

Gloria Sharp's "Land and Sea"

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ARTISTS (Cont'd from p. 3)

When she is finished, she steams the fabric for about 10 minutes, "washes everything up," and looks to see if she likes the result.

"I get many surprises and a lot of disappointments as well," she said. "Batik is speaking to you, and you have to listen. It's kind of like life. It makes you stay flexible." The layering in batik appeals to her. Sometimes she starts with photos taken in nature, but most of her work involves "shape and color and texture relationships." "My work has become rather abstract," she said.

Asked how it feels when she sells a piece, she said she enjoys it. "The pleasure comes from somebody else saying they want to live with this." She likes to visit later and see how her work fits into the buyer's home. It's "like my little children that have grown up," she said. (Her own four children—two sons and two daughters—are all grown now and live in homes scattered from Los Alamos to Portland, Oregon.)

Sharp likes to start a new work soon after she sells one. "When I'm finished, I'm finished," she said, but selling a work leaves room on her walls for more. "It's really a little frightening to look at that blank canvas" when she starts a new work, she said, but once she has started, she's fine.

Origami

When STB held its going-away party for Rita Spencer, a long-time employee of Laboratory Directed Research and Development (LDRD), one of the loveliest gifts presented to her was an elegant, framed "soaring crane" origami creation done by **Lori Abney**, team leader of finance for STB. Spencer now has that gift in a place of honor on the wall of her living room, across from her piano.

In a recent interview, Abney said that she has been doing origami since childhood. "My dad's mom taught me how to fold," she said. "She was the one who always bought me books. They only cost a quarter. Now both they and the paper cost so much more."

The books are still good, she said, "but they're all in Japanese." Asked if she reads Japanese, she said, "No. I read pictures."

One of the first projects she remembers doing was a crane. She was 4 or 5 at the time. Since that time, she has done a menagerie that includes cranes and owls and turtles.

Nowadays, she has elegant, full-color magazines in English that show the educated reader how to make wonderful projects. She "folds" at meetings and when she is waiting for her daughter, Stephanie, 12, who spends a lot of time at soccer and volleyball practice.

She works in many different colors, and she does "lots of 3-D things—modular." On such a project, she folds many identical pieces and then assembles them into amazing creations.

Right now, she is working on a 3-D swan that requires 500 pieces. She also hopes to do "a 3-D Santa Claus," and she's thinking about a large, freestanding elephant.

She gives away all of her creations. "I don't have any in my house," she said—but she has never sold one of her works. "If I sold something," she said, "it wouldn't be as much fun."

Lori Abney's "Soaring Crane" on the wall of Rita Spencer's home

She and her daughter sometimes make origami creations that move and then give them away to children in restaurants.

"We teach our friends," she said, and added that she would be willing to teach any STB employee who showed an interest.

Many people are involved in origami, she said, and new ideas are being developed all the time. "There's an origami web site," she said, "and there's a huge club."

"It's fun," she said—and she added that experts believe that children who do origami at an early age develop better hand-eye coordination and better concentration, and, as a result, do better in school.

Mystery Novels

Howard Hanson is a meteorologist who uses his scientific knowledge to assist LDRD. Before moving to LDRD, he was group leader of Atmospheric and Climate Sciences (now EES-2),

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ARTISTS (Cont'd from p. 4)

and before that, he was executive associate director of the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences at the University of Colorado in Boulder. He has a bachelor's degree in aeronautical and astronautical engineering from the University of Illinois and a doctorate in atmospheric science from the University of Miami.

But when Hanson takes a break and stares out into space, he may be thinking of fictionalized murder and mayhem instead of science. He is, after all, the creator of the "Four Corners Mysteries."

Howard Hanson with book in hand—*his* book

His first mystery was true to his scientific background: He designed a cover for it that featured both a mountain range and the chemical equations for air pollution.

Hanson now has three books in print: "The Dean's Murders," (written in 2000) in which a chemistry professor gets killed in a complex case involving a drug ring; "Classical Villainy," (2001) about a pothunter and antiquities smuggling leading to multiple murder (there's a chapter in Santa Fe); and "Excess Homicide," (completed in the summer of 2002), which involves "NeoNazis bumping off environmentalists." Local readers will recognize some of the locales. "The guy in Santa Fe gets killed with a crossbow" in a downtown Santa Fe park, Hanson said, and, "A guy in Taos gets tossed off the gorge bridge."

He has a fourth book almost completed, but it doesn't have a title yet. It involves beheadings in Colorado.

All of the books have the same major characters—the dean from the first book and a female investigator from the Durango, Colorado, Police Department. The two characters are normal, successful people who fall in love and eventually marry, he said.

The university in his books—called "Fremont State"—is Ft. Lewis College with a few changes. Hanson admits that there is a strong strain of "academic satire" in his books. He draws on his 16 years in academia to poke a little fun at university politics.

His first three books were "mystery thrillers"—stories in which the reader knows "who the bad guy is," but the protagonist doesn't. His new book, however, will be a true mystery—a story in which neither the reader nor the protagonist knows who the murderer is. True mysteries are more interesting to write, Hanson said. "You have to think ahead more."

Hanson is pleased with his new book. "I'm getting better," he said.

He has published so far through "1st Books Library," which produces "print-on-demand books." Bookstores generally don't carry them, but his novels can be ordered through regular bookstores, as well as through 1st Books or through him. He's now thinking, however, about seeking out a regular publisher. "I'm going to push hard to find an agent," he said.

Like many writers, Hanson first became interested in producing mystery novels because, like many would-be writers, he thought he could improve on the books he bought to pass the time on flights to Washington and elsewhere. He said he doesn't "plot books out in advance. I just make it up as it goes along." Sometimes, this approach can have surprising results. The dean, for example "started out as the villain," Hanson said, "but changed because I liked him too much."

Is the dean really Hanson in hard covers? Hanson says no. But, he acknowledged, "You write what you know. They fly fish and ski, and I do too."

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Prints

Stephen Schultz, the web master for STB, was once a psychologist in California—but he was seduced by Santa Fe and became a New Mexican and an artist. He now creates beautiful prints, but he arrived at print-making by way of several other creative arts.

His first interest (about 1993) was clay sculpture. "It was something that was Santa Fe-inspired," he said in a recent interview. He had first visited Santa Fe in 1985, and he became interested in American Indian art. By the early 1990s, he was making clay tiles, then clay sculpture. He worked in low-fire terra cotta. He liked the color and the feel of the sand that went into the process because he found it "very much related to the landscape here."

Gradually, art began to take center stage in his life. "It basically took over parts of my garage and the basement of the house," he said. "I bought a kiln. At the same time, I was starting to take photographs." For a couple of years, he also worked in wood and metal sculptures. "I was at a clay store," he recalled, "and I saw an ad for 'welding for sculpture.' I added an oxyacetylene torch to my collection…." He found that metal sculpture was like the creation of jewelry "except for scale."

But, he said, "In the last five years, I've settled on working on paper." At first, he used watercolor paints, but then, more recently, he began making prints. He thinks it is the texture of the paper that attracts him. Like other artists in the field, he is "drawn by the quality of fine, often hand-made papers." Most of his papers "are European made."

"The prints I've been doing are mostly etchings," he said. "Traditionally, the image is cut into the plate by acid." The plate is typically copper. One can put a "resist" on the plate and then scratch it or submerge it in a batch of acid. The acid eats out little holes in the copper. Then ink is rolled onto the plate and wiped off. Some of the ink stays behind, forced into the holes or scratches made by the acid. Paper that has been soaked in water is then forced against the plate in a press.

Some print artists spend more than a hundred hours laboring over a plate, Schultz said, but, "I'm more a photographer who doesn't particularly like photographs."

His first multicolor/multiplate print, for example, was a golden-red hibiscus that he "shot in my kitchen in Oakland," he said. Light was streaming in from behind the flower, revealing every tiny line and vein in beautiful, delicate detail. It was the "quality of light" that interested him. He made the print about four inches square. "I wanted to start small and see how it worked out," he said. The process he used was "a modern version of traditional etching." The plates in this process are a photosensitive polymer. The image is created on film. The film is put over the plate and exposed to ultraviolet light. The areas exposed to the light harden. The unexposed areas remain water soluble. The plate is actually etched using water rather than acid.

"It's an approach that is appealing to many artists," Schultz said, "because it's nontoxic."

He sees the print as "not so much a hibiscus as a lighted object" with pattern in its ribs and leaves.

He's sold a little of his work now, and he would like to sell more. "I've dabbled in a lot of things," he said, "and I think print-making really suits me." The process is labor-intensive. He finds that there is something very satisfying about making the plate, wiping the plate, and hand-cranking the press. "You get a physical object out of the process," he said. He finds it "very different from the web work I do."

Stephen Schultz's print entitled "Afternoon Light"

Friends and Relatives

Ask STB employees about artists, and you quickly find that some have friends and spouses who are deeply involved in art.

Nancy Rodarte, for example, is dating Santa Fe artist **Larry Jacquez**. He's a santero. He does "santos," or wood carvings of saints, angels, and the Holy Family.

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ARTISTS (Cont'd from p. 6)

His work is displayed in galleries in Santa Fe, and he constantly gets orders. This fall, he has been busy producing wooden angels, but his work is surprisingly varied. He also makes wooden pigs for Donald J. Pliner, a company that makes elegant shoes and boots.

Virgil Sanders, who was leader of STB-Planning for several years before moving to the Operations Directorate recently, is married to an artist. His wife, **Jan Sanders**, makes many beautiful things that are displayed in Galeria del Jardin on the highway to Santa Fe, but her specialty is wood creations—especially turned bowls that reveal the grain of the wood. She is just beginning a project that she has wanted to try for several years: creation of a hand-made roll-top desk. She recently had a large block of very special wood delivered to their home, where she plans make the desk, using specialized tools housed in the garage. Virgil Sanders would thoroughly understand what happened to Stephen Schultz' garage and basement in Oakland. Sanders said he has never parked a car in his garage….

STEINHAUS (Cont'd from p.2)

His short-term task—between now and the end of the legislative session—will be to "build a justified $1.8 billion budget for schools in New Mexico," an increase of about $100 million.

He will be "building briefing documents on every single line in the budget" and making presentations to the Legislative Finance Committee, the Legislative Education Study Committee, and the Legislature itself.

He will help to implement what the Legislature passes, and, in the long term, he will be working on strategic planning for the schools and the state.

"There are states across the country that have gone from flat—which is where New Mexico is right now—to a very steep curve of improvement (in education)," he said. "We're going to learn from their successes and failures…."

In the meantime, he has already had some memorable experiences because of his advisement role in Richardson's administration. Recently, during Mexico President Vicente Fox's visit to New Mexico, Steinhaus got an opportunity to learn first-hand about Fox's views on education.

"The challenges he's facing as president of Mexico are huge," Steinhaus said. "They're bigger than I had ever imagined." Education is Fox's No. 1 priority, Steinhaus said, and, "He wants to be a partner with New Mexico."

Fox said more than half of the parents of school children in Mexico today don't have any education beyond the fourth grade themselves. As a result, Fox is looking at programs that help parents as well as children.

The educational tasks in New Mexico aren't that daunting, but they are significant.

Asked if he is excited about his new job, Steinhaus said, "Oh yes." He thinks the position will be "tremendously engaging and challenging."

Notes from Allen Hartford

This year—2003—has been a time of change and challenge at Los Alamos National Laboratory, a time of much uncertainty.

Science and Technology Base Programs, like all other divisions at the Laboratory, has been affected by world events, by the decision to bid the Laboratory management contract for the first time, by reorganization, and by the departure of some major players. Nonetheless, we have stayed the course and have many achievements of which we can be proud.

Throughout this time of anxiety, it has always been apparent that STB has many strong, creative, dedicated people on board. My thanks to you for all that you do. It is truly my honor to lead such a vibrant organization.

May all of you have a wonderful holiday. You have earned it. May your travels and activities be safe and enjoyable, and may you come back rested and ready to do your very best to face the new year—whatever it brings.

Allen

STB and HR Combined for a Canyon Christmas Party

Photos by Charmian Schaller

Food, Music, Dancing, Prancing, and Prizes