

## BNL — A Super Superconducting Lab!

### At APS Meeting, BNL Discusses Secrets Of High-Temperature Superconductors

Although it was discovered more than 20 years ago, a particular type of high-temperature ( $T_c$ ) superconductor — material that conducts electricity with almost zero resistance — is regaining the attention of scientists at BNL in research funded by the Office of Basic Energy Sciences within DOE's Office of Science. Copper-oxide compounds, called cuprates, operate at temperatures warmer than traditional superconductors but still far below freezing. Understanding the mechanism for these superconductors may one day help scientists design superconductors able to function closer to room temperature for applications such as more efficient power transmission.

Discovered in 1986, the most perplexing of these cuprate superconductors is "LBCO," named for the elements it contains: lanthanum, barium, copper, and oxygen. After years of research on similar materials, BNL researchers have learned how to "grow" better samples of LBCO, which has allowed extensive studies to be made on its intriguing properties. Three BNL physicists in the Condensed Matter Physics & Materials Science Department discussed their most recent findings about LBCO at the March 2007 meeting of the American Physical Society (APS). The details of their research are highlighted below. — Kendra Snyder

#### A Superconductor With Insulating Properties



One of the most perplexing findings involving LBCO is that the high-temperature superconductor actually has distinct insulating-like properties. Each barium atom has one fewer electron than lanthanum, so increasing barium

adds electron "holes," or the absence of electrons, to the system. The more barium that is "doped" into the material, the more holes, and the greater the superconductivity — until the composition reaches a point where there is exactly one barium atom for every eight copper atoms, a state known as the 1/8 doping. Then, oddly, the superconductivity disappears. Above this point, as more holes (barium atoms) are added, the superconductivity reappears.

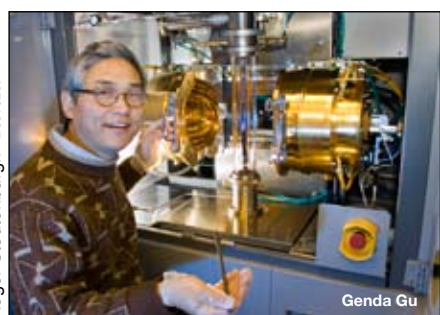
Christopher Homes discussed this odd phenomenon on March 5, 2007, during the APS meeting. At BNL's National

Synchrotron Light Source and other facilities on site, Homes investigates LBCO's electronic properties by shining various types of light onto an LBCO crystal and measuring the intensity that is reflected back. This optical picture tells scientists about the behavior of the charge carriers — or holes — in LBCO.

Most materials have a set number of carriers that scientists can count using these methods. As a material becomes a superconductor, some of the holes lower their energy by falling into a superconducting state that allows them to

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#### Paving Way for Crystal Growth Helps Advance Superconductor Research



In order to study the properties of LBCO superconductors, scientists need to produce large, single crystals of the material — a difficult task that was not possible until recently. At the state-of-the-art crystal growth facility in BNL's physics build-

ing, physicist Genda Gu and his colleagues have perfected the process. Gu discussed his crystal growth method during the APS meeting on March 7, 2007.

The crystals are grown in an infrared image furnace, a machine with two mirrors that focuses infrared light onto a feed rod, heating it to about 2,200 degrees Celsius (3,992 degrees Fahrenheit) and causing it to melt. Under just the right conditions, Gu and his colleagues can make the liquefied material recrystallize as a single uniform crystal.

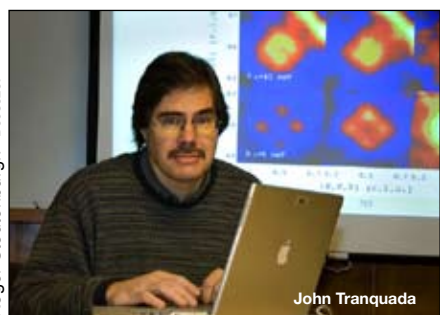
At present, the most interesting form of LBCO has one barium atom for every eight copper

atoms, or a 1/8 "doping," at which point the material loses its superconductivity. Achieving this high barium concentration is extremely difficult and is the reason many scientists previously opted to use different but related materials for their research on superconducting stripes and other properties, Gu said.

"LBCO was the first high-temperature superconductor discovered, but everyone switched over to studying other materials for a while because they weren't able to grow single crystals with a concentration of barium greater than 11 percent," Gu said. "Now,

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#### Looking for 'Stripes' in High- $T_c$ Superconductors



In LBCO, as in all materials, negatively charged electrons repel one another. But by trying to stay as far apart as possible, each individual electron is confined to a limited space, which costs energy. To achieve a lower-energy state, the elec-

trons arrange themselves with their spins aligned in alternating directions on adjacent atoms, a configuration known as antiferromagnetic order. As mentioned above, scientists can dope the material with electron "holes," or the absence of electrons, to allow the electrons/holes to move more freely and carry current as a superconductor. The question is: How do these holes arrange themselves?

BNL's John Tranquada answered that question during his talk about superconducting "stripes" on March 5, 2007, during the APS meeting. Stud-

ies conducted by Tranquada and other BNL researchers support the controversial theory that the holes segregate themselves into stripes that alternate with antiferromagnetic regions in the material.

"There's a lot of excitement in trying to understand why these materials are superconducting, and there's plenty of controversy surrounding it," Tranquada said.

Most recently, Tranquada's research group examined the effect of the stripes on vibrations in the crystal lattice. Lattice vibrations play a role

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### BNL Bakes Advanced Superconducting Material in R&D for LHC Magnets

BNL's Superconducting Magnet Division (SMD) staff are baking — but not cake. They are baking an advanced type of superconducting material in a large oven that will bake, or "react" the material at 1,200°F (700°C) for several days. The oven was installed last fall as part of the Large Hadron Collider Accelerator Research Program (LARP) at BNL. With Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBL) staff, SMD staff members, with contributions from BNL's Central Fabrication Services Division, are working to develop more powerful superconducting magnets for an Large Hadron Collider (LHC) upgrade. This giant collider is near completion at the CERN laboratory in Geneva, Switzerland. Although the LHC upgrade will not be started until 2009, becoming operational only in the next decade, research and development (R&D) must always be well ahead of the game.



On the Bldg. 902 production floor, Tom van Winckel and Glenn Jochen, Superconducting Magnet Division, prepare to "bake" a magnet coil of niobium (Nb) and tin (Sn) in a huge oven to produce the superconducting compound  $Nb_3Sn$  being tested at BNL for use in a future upgrade to the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland.

Like the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider (RHIC) at BNL, the LHC will smash two beams of protons or heavy ions into each other, recreating conditions a fraction of a second after the dawn of the universe. The two colliders complement each other: though both can operate with either protons or heavy ions, RHIC is designed primarily for heavy ion experiments, which are best done at 100 billion electron volts (GeV) of energy per nucleon, the LHC primarily for protons, at about 3,500 GeV per proton. From the results of the experiments, the scientists expect to get new information on how the forces of nature acted at the time immediately following the Big Bang. The present LHC is scheduled to make its first test run at a low energy in November 2007. First collisions at high energies are expected in mid-2008.

As at RHIC, the accelerated beams at the LHC will be guided and focused around the collider ring by electromagnets, which are specially made with coils of material that become magnetic when electricity is passed through them. Superconducting materials, when cooled to very low temperatures near absolute zero, lose all their normal resistance to electricity and become "super"conductors. Magnets made of superconducting materials can be much more powerful than other magnets, because the lack of resistance to electricity allows more current to flow through them before they get too hot and "quench" or shut down the magnet.

#### Magnet R&D at BNL

Said Peter Wanderer, who heads the SMD, "The R&D we are working on makes use of a superconducting material,  $Nb_3Sn$ , which is a niobium-tin compound that performs better than the niobium titanium compound,  $NbTi$ , used for the existing superconducting magnets in RHIC and the LHC. The snag is that the niobium-tin is very brittle and tough to work with. However, a significant upgrade could result from using a small number of  $Nb_3Sn$  magnets just before the point in the ring where the beams collide. Hence our tests on prototype coils of the  $Nb_3Sn$ ."

Wanderer explained that BNL is making long (4-meter) coils of wire of niobium and tin in order to study the effect of length on magnet operation. "You start with a rod of tin about the diameter of a pencil lead, and cover it with about the amount of niobium to form the 'wood' of the pencil," he said. "That part is done by industry. LBL gets the wire and makes it into a cable, which is sent to BNL to be wound into a coil. At this stage, the tin and niobium are still separate."

The coils must then be wound. To make them superconducting, they are loaded into the oven to be reacted,

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## CALENDAR

### OF LABORATORY EVENTS

- The BERA Store in Berkner Hall is open weekdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information on BERA events, contact Andrea Dehler, Ext. 3347, or Christine Carter, Ext. 2873.
- Additional information for Hospitality Committee events may be found at the Lollipop House and the laundry in the apartment area.
- The Recreation Building #317 (Rec. Hall) is located in the apartment area.
- Contact names are provided for most events for more information.
- Events flagged with an asterisk (\*) have an accompanying story in this week's Bulletin.

### — EACH WEEK —

#### Weekdays: Free English for Speakers Of Other Languages Classes

Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced classes. Various times. All are welcome. Learn English, make friends. See [www.bnl.gov/esol/schedule.html](http://www.bnl.gov/esol/schedule.html) for schedule. Jen Lynch, Ext. 4894.

**Mondays: BNL Social & Cultural Club**  
Noon-1 p.m., Brookhaven Center, South Room, free beginners dance lessons. Rudy Alforque, Ext. 4733, [alforque@bnl.gov](mailto:alforque@bnl.gov).

**Mondays: Pilates**  
12:15 & 5:15 p.m. Rec. Hall. Ext. 5090.

**Mondays: Jiu Jitsu Club**  
6-7:30 p.m. B'haven Center. All levels, ages 6 & up. \$10/class. Tom, Ext. 4556.

**Mondays & Thursdays: Kickboxing**  
\$5 per class. Noon-1 p.m. in the gym. Registration is required. Christine Carter, Ext. 5090.

**Mon., Tue. & Thu: Ving Tsun Kung Fu**  
Noon-1 p.m., B'haven Center, North Room. Taught by Master William Moy. Scott Bradley, Ext. 5745, [bradley@bnl.gov](mailto:bradley@bnl.gov).

**Mon., Thurs., & Fri.: Tai Chi**  
Noon-1 p.m., B'haven Center North Rm. Adam Rusek, Ext. 5830, [rusek@bnl.gov](mailto:rusek@bnl.gov).

**Tues. & Thurs: Jazzercise**  
Noon, Rec. Hall. Ext. 5090.

**Tuesday & Thursday: Aerobic Fitness**  
5:15 p.m., Rec. Hall. 10 classes for \$40 or \$5 per class. Pat Flood, Ext. 7866, [flood@bnl.gov](mailto:flood@bnl.gov).

**Tuesday & Thursday: Aqua Aerobics**  
5:15 p.m., Pool. Ext. 5090.

**Tuesdays: Welcome Coffee**  
10 a.m.-noon, apartment area gazebo. First Tuesday of every month is special for Lab newcomers and leaving guests. Lisa Yang, 979-3937.

**Tuesdays: BNL Music Club**  
Noon, B'haven Center, North Room. Come hear live music. Joe Vignola, Ext. 3846.

**Tuesdays: Toastmasters**  
1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month, 5:30 p.m., Bldg. 463, Room 160. Guests, visitors always welcome. [www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/toastmasters/](http://www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/toastmasters/).

**Tue., Wed. & Thu: Rec Hall Activities**  
5:30-9:30 p.m. General activities, TV, ping pong, chess, games, socializing. Christine Carter, Ext. 5090.

**Wednesdays: On-Site Play Group**  
10 a.m.-noon, Recreation Bldg. An infant/toddler drop-in event. Parents meet while children play. Petra Adams, 821-9238.

**Wednesdays: Ballroom Dance Class**  
B'haven Center, N. Ballroom. Instructor: Giny Rae. Arup Ghosh, Ext. 3974; Donna Grabowski, Ext. 2720; or Vinita Ghosh, Ext. 6226.

**Wednesdays: Weight Watchers**  
Noon-1 p.m. Michael Thorn, Ext. 8612.

**Wednesdays: Yoga**  
Noon-1 p.m., B'haven Center. Free. Ila Campbell, Ext. 2206, [ila@bnl.gov](mailto:ila@bnl.gov).

**Wednesdays: Pilates**  
5:15 p.m., Rec Hall. Ext. 5090.

**Thursdays: Reiki Healing Class**  
Noon-1 p.m., Bldg. 211 Conference Rm. Nicole Bernholz, Ext. 2027.

**Fridays: Family Swim Night**  
5-8 p.m. BNL Pool. \$5 per family.

**Fridays: BNL Social & Cultural Club**  
Noon-1 p.m., B'haven Center, South Room, free beginners dance lessons. 7-11:30 p.m. North Ballroom, Dance Social, workshops. Rudy Alforque, Ext. 4733, [alforque@bnl.gov](mailto:alforque@bnl.gov).

### CIGNA: Tuesdays, Bldg. 400

A CIGNA Healthcare representative will be on site in Human Resources, Bldg 400, on Tuesdays, to assist you with any claims issues that you have been unable to resolve yourself. Janice Petgrave will be available for 30-minute meetings, by appointment only, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Bring all pertinent documentation to your meeting. To schedule, call Linda Rundlett, Benefits Office, Ext. 5126.

## Then & Now at the Research Library

By looking at the January 1947 photo of BNL's "entire Research Library" — a couple of not very large bookshelves — and comparing these resources with the wealth of printed and web-based information now available for Lab researchers through the library, (see [www.library.bnl.gov/isd/reslib/](http://www.library.bnl.gov/isd/reslib/)), one can savor a real "Then & Now" time span. A good part of that span was experienced by Librarian Supervisor Madeline Windsor, who looks back over her time as a BNL research librarian for over 40 years.

When Windsor came to the Lab for a job interview in 1963, she wore a suit, with matching shoes and pocketbook and white gloves — the proper attire for interviews at that time. That interview embarked her on a career at BNL. She now plans to retire at the end of April.

"When I first arrived, most of the librarians were women who had worked in the U.S. Army Signal Corp," recalls Windsor. "Since those early days, I have seen many changes in the way we collect, organize, and disseminate information. Technology and the information explosion impacted the way we do business. The migration from print to online materials presented many challenges. Meeting those challenges over the years has made my job both interesting and rewarding."



Librarian Madeline Windsor looks back and forward.

Windsor remembers that in earlier days, researchers would come to the library to browse journals. In particular, in the late 1940s, well before her arrival and before the Chemistry Department labs were completed, Chemistry Chair Richard Dodson told new chemists to spend time in the library to find a scientific area that they would like to investigate. Among these "browsers," famously, was Raymond Davis, Jr., whose decision to study solar neutrinos eventually won him the 2002 Nobel Prize in Physics.

Since then, the library has greatly expanded its reference and research capabilities. Windsor was instrumental in setting up access to many online resources that have made it quicker and more convenient for researchers to retrieve information.

"Online research is efficient, but it means that camaraderie isn't quite the same as it used to



Entire Research Library, January 1947

be," says Windsor. "The interaction between library staff and researchers was different in the old days. We knew them, and they knew us. Now, most research is conducted right from desktop computers."

Adds Windsor, "I realize how far we've come when I think back to the days when we would remove bibliographic index cards from the catalog drawers by using knitting needles. We would place the knitting needles through holes in cards that were punched according to individual topics. Using the knitting needles we could remove only the cards on

the topic we were interested in. It may seem antiquated now, but it was the precursor to database systems."

So, along the way, Windsor has watched the library evolve. "I've seen computers replace card catalogs and seminars become 'webinars,'" she says. When asked why she has decided to retire, she replies, "I woke up one morning and realized that it's time for me to move on to the next phase of life. I feel good about leaving, and also about what I'm leaving behind. My career here has been the best learning experience I could ever have hoped for." — Jane Koropsak

### Superconductor With Insulating Properties (cont'd)

flow without resistance. As these carriers condense, there is a characteristic change in the optical conductivity. However, even though LBCO is not a superconductor at the 1/8 doping, the number of holes still decreases at low temperature.

Homes and other researchers attribute this feature to the formation of the so-called "energy gap." In semiconductors, the charge gap blocks the flow of current because of its isotropic nature (the gap spreads evenly in all directions). Superconductors also have energy gaps, but

in the cuprates these gaps have different energies in different directions with respect to the copper-oxygen chemical bonds.

"The more we look at this charge gap, the more it looks like a superconducting gap," Homes said. "It has the same magnitude, the same shape and symmetry. Yet, it doesn't have superconductivity."

Homes and other BNL researchers continue to tackle this mysterious problem in order to understand why a material that wants to be a superconductor is behaving like an insulator.

### Crystal Growth (cont'd)

we can study the whole class of high-Tc materials."

Each crystal takes about a month to make, with precise control over growth temperature, atmosphere, and other factors. BNL is currently capable of making crystals with barium concentrations up to 16.5 percent, a world record, Gu said.

— Kendra Snyder

### Arrivals & Departures

— Arrivals —

Manojee Bhattacharya..... ES&T  
Damayanti Naik ..... C-AD  
Susan Pagano ..... HR/OMC  
Michael Silberstein ..... Biology  
Lori Stiegler..... S&H Srvc.  
Huiming Xiong ..... CFN  
Yi Zhang ..... C-AD

— Departures —

Toshifumi Sugama ..... ES&T

### TIAA-CREF One-on-One Retirement Counseling

A TIAA-CREF consultant will visit BNL on Wednesday, April 25, to answer employees' questions about their financial matters. For an appointment, call Suzanne Leone, (866) 842-2053, Ext. 4601.

### Vanguard One-on-One Retirement Planning, 4/25

On Wednesday, April 25, the Vanguard Group invites you to spend 45 minutes one-on-one with a licensed Vanguard representative to talk on site about financial issues. Schedule your 45-minute session online at [www.meetvanguard.com](http://www.meetvanguard.com) or call 1-800-662-0106, Ext. 14500.

### SBU Workshop on Metals, Environment, Health, 4/27

#### BNL's Lisa Miller Will Discuss Metals, Disease

Lisa Miller of the National Synchrotron Light Source Department will be among the speakers at a workshop on "Metals, Environment and Human Health: Bridging the Gaps," to be held Friday, April 27 at Stony Brook University. Miller will speak on "X-Ray Imaging of Trace Metal Concentration and Distribution in Diseased Cells and Tissues."

The workshop is open to all and will be held at the Charles B. Wang Center, Lecture Hall #2, 8:45 a.m.-5 p.m. The workshop will focus on the behavior of metals as they relate to environmental processes and human health. Leading researchers in environmental chemistry, toxicology, and epidemiology will highlight current topics and identify future directions for research and collaboration, followed by an open panel discussion.

Miller's talk, scheduled for about 2:55 p.m., will cover three topics: the role of zinc and copper in plaque formation in Alzheimer's disease, the role of copper in scrapie pathogenesis, and the use of strontium in the treatment of osteoporosis.

### Join in the 'B-N-L 6-0' Photo Op, 5/1

All BNLers — employees, retirees, facility users, guests, contractors, and on-site residents — are invited to come to the field beside Police Headquarters, Bldg. 50, at noon on Tuesday, May 1. All participants will then take part in the giant human "B-N-L 6-0" living logo for a photo- and video-op from the water tower to celebrate the Lab's 60th anniversary, and get a free T-shirt while supplies last. Bad weather prevented the photo's being taken on the original date of March 21. The rain date for May 1 will be May 3. For more information, see [www.bnl.gov/60th/events/photo.asp](http://www.bnl.gov/60th/events/photo.asp).

### 'Stripes' in High Tc Superconductors (cont'd)

in pairing up the electrons that carry current in conventional superconductors. At the Laboratoire Leon Brillouin, Saclay, in France, researchers bombarded samples of superconducting materials and the same stripe-ordered non-superconductor with beams of neutrons and measured how the beams scattered. Comparing the energy and momentum of the incoming beams with those scattered by the samples gives the scientists a measure of how much energy and momentum is transferred to the lattice vibrations. Each of these vibrations normally has a particular, well-defined frequency for a

given wavelength. But in the superconductor experiment, at a particular wavelength, the scientists observed an anomaly: a wider range of frequencies in the lattice vibrations.

The scientists observed this anomalous signature most clearly in samples with observable stripe order, but they also saw it in samples of good superconductors without static stripes. This indicates the presence of dynamic stripes — meaning that the stripes can wiggle through the crystal lattice — and suggests that stripes might be important in the mechanism for high-Tc superconductivity, Tranquada said.

### Superconducting Material for LHC (cont'd)

allowing the brittle superconducting Nb<sub>3</sub>Sn material to be formed. At all stages of production, the 4-meter coils must be handled with rigid, precise tooling. The tooling was designed by the SMD and made by Central Fabrication Services personnel.

"Right now, we have reacted coils of Nb<sub>3</sub>Sn coming out of the oven," said Wanderer. "To get the very accurate magnetic field we need, the coils must stay absolutely still even when electricity is passed through them. So we add supports to the coils, cool them to near zero, then start the electricity. The coils become superconducting magnets, and we go on to the next phase of LARP tests."

— Liz Seubert



