

Notes from the 2012 Physics Department Alumni Reunion

Our department hosted its sixth alumni reunion on Sept. 21 & 22, 2012. The event began with a barbecue on Friday the 21st on the Metcalf Center plaza. Fortunately, the rain held off and alumni were able to socialize with faculty and friends. We had great attendance and it was great to see so many old friends from the near and more distant past.

The first session began with an impressive presentation on complex networks by one of the fathers of the field, Laszlo Barabasi (PhD 1994), who is currently a Distinguished Professor at Northeastern University. He was followed by an engaging talk on nanophotonics and photovoltaics by Mike Naughton (PhD 1986), who now chairs the Physics Department at Boston College. We also had two presentations by our own faculty, Professor Rick Averitt and Professor Pankaj Mehta on cutting-edge development in metamaterials and biological physics.

The late afternoon featured career talks by Denny Hamill (PhD 1969), Justin Pniower (BA Physics & Philosophy 1999, PhD Oxford 2005), and Kristen Stoops (MA 1993) that encompassed a wide range of professional experiences: industrial research on solid-state devices, software development, and biotechnology. A sweet moment was the introduction of Denny Hamill by his granddaughter, Lee Hamill (BA 2012), who is currently a first-year graduate student at USC in materials science. Our graduate students appreciated learning about this diversity of opportunities for physicists.

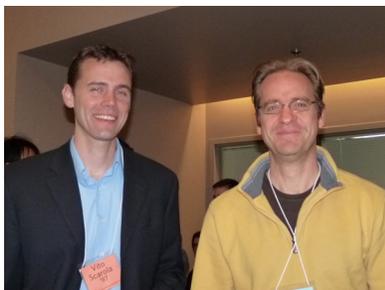


(Top left) Denny Hamill (PhD 1969), granddaughter Lee Hamill (BA 2012), and Dick Bell (PhD 1968); **(Top right)** Professor Gene Stanley and former Director of Facilities AI Stone; **(2nd left)** Prashant Sharma (PhD 2003; Assistant Professor at Suffolk University), Gary Garber (MA 1999; Physics instructor at BU Academy), and Nick Gross (PhD 1995; Staff member at BU's Center for Space Physics); **(2nd right)** current graduate students and staff; **(3rd left)** Haris Kudrolli (PhD 2001; Senior scientist at Radiation Monitoring Devices) and Professor Rob Carey; **(3rd right)** Peter Wintersteiner (PhD 1976), Professor Emeritus George Zimmerman, and AI Stone; **(Bottom)** current students with Professor Rick Averitt



(Top left) Laszlo Barabasi (PhD 1994), Department Chair Sid Redner, and Mike Naughton (PhD 1986); **(Top right)** Peter Wintersteiner (PhD 1976) and Professor Emeritus Dean Edmonds; **(Bottom right)** graduate student Annie Luo with Elena Strelakova (PhD 2012; Postdoc at MIT)

The evening concluded with a dinner reception in the atrium of the Metcalf Center, where many new contacts were made between our current physics students and our alumni. Adding to the festive atmosphere were a large number of graduate student posters on recent research that fostered plenty of good conversation.



(Top left) Terry Russell (PhD 1998) and Denise Ciotti Labieniec (MA 1995); (Top right) Vito Scarola (BA 1997) and Professor Rick Averitt; (Bottom) graduate student Alan Gabel during a test-run interview



Alumni career talks continued on Saturday morning, with Reza Sadr (PhD 1998, JD 2011) discussing his path to patent law. Terry Russell (PhD 1998) presented his roller-coaster ride as an entrepreneur and investor in science and technology-based start-up companies. Denise Labieniec (MA 1995) related her meandering path to high-school teaching and to her position as Director of Studies at The Winsor School. Chris Serino (PhD 2012) offered much useful advice for new employment seekers in describing his recent



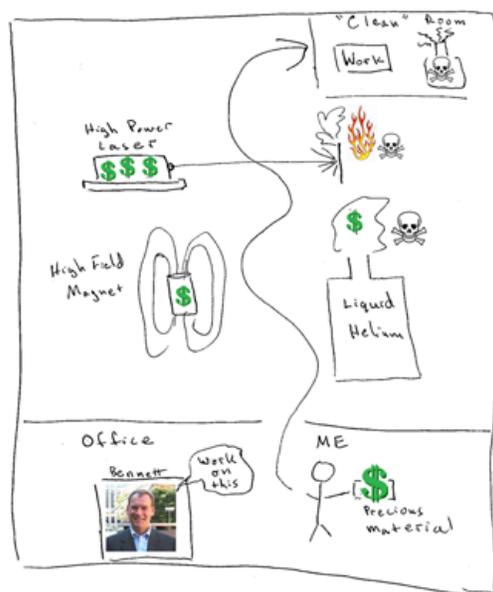
(Top) Denny Hamill (PhD 1969) and Professor Emeritus Dean Edmonds; (Middle left) Claudia DeGrandi (PhD 2011; Postdoc at Yale University) and graduate student Maira Constantino; (Middle right) Vidya Madhavan (PhD 2000; Professor at Boston College) and Denise Ciotti Labieniec (MA 1995); (Bottom) Physics Office staff Winna Somers and Kelly Graska



path to becoming a Technical Staff Member at Lincoln Labs. This session was capped by two of our own students, Alan Gabel and Evan Weinberg, undergoing test-run employment interviews. These panelists provided many useful pointers for CV preparation, for effective interviewing, and general pointers for making the best possible impression. The interviews were an eye-opening experience for our students.

Our reunion concluded with three scientific talks. Vito Scarola (BA 1997, PhD Penn State 2002), an Assistant Professor of Physics at Virginia Tech, gave an entertaining presentation of his undergraduate research with some amusing recollections of his work in Bennett Goldberg's lab. He also discussed his current research on novel collective excitations in quantum condensed-

My 1996 View of the Lab



A caricature of Bennett Goldberg's lab from Vito Scarola's recollection of his undergraduate experiences there

matter systems. Bogdan Dobrescu (PhD 1998), a senior scientist at Fermilab, gave a nice overview of phenomena that arise from the Higgs particle. The session concluded with our own Professor Tulika Bose discussing the exciting developments that led to the discovery of the Higgs at the LHC.

Our reunion was a great success. Alumni and students established many new connections and strengthened existing ties. We have a large and highly-accomplished alumni community that offers many opportunities for networking. We look forward to strengthening these ties and we also hope to see you at our next alumni reunion, if not before. Please do stay in touch!