

MIT CHEMICAL ENGINEERING ALUMNI NEWS

# XCurrents



Alumni, friends and colleagues gather to remember Professor Emeritus Adel F. Sarofim during May 11 Symposium (Page 18)

## Letter from *Department Head Klavs F. Jensen*



**W**elcome to the Fall 2012 edition of the Alumni Newsletter. The students and faculty have returned to campus after a beautiful New England summer and engaged in a new semester of learning, teaching, and research.

On the cover of this fall's newsletter is an image of the bench scale demonstration plant from the Novartis-MIT Center for Continuous Manufacturing in connection with a visit by the Novartis CEO, Joe Jimenez. The Center, whose custom laboratory is housed in Building 66, combines the industrial expertise of Novartis with MIT's expertise in scientific and technological innovation. The Center is working to develop new technologies that could replace the conventional batch-based approach in the pharmaceuticals industry with continuous manufacturing processes from start to finish. This spring, the Center demonstrated the first truly continuous production of pharmaceuticals from starting reagents to final tablets under automated control. The Center completed its first five year period, and I'm pleased to report that Novartis has committed \$45 million to another five year period. Bernhardt Trout has skillfully led the formation of the Center with faculty colleagues from chemical engineering, chemistry, and mechanical engineering. You can find more about the center on page 14.

## HIGHLIGHTS

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# Course X Alumnus Returns to Campus to Make Students Laugh

Dr. Pete Ludovice (PhD '89) returned to MIT's campus on July 10, 2012 to share with current MIT students his wit and wisdom through his stand-up powerpoint presentation, "Feel the Power of the Dork Side." After regaling the packed audience with humorous anecdotes from his life, Pete got a chance to meet with former students who are now at MIT, as well as some of his own former classmates.

After a PhD from MIT and postdoctoral studies at IBM, NASA and the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule-Zürich, Pete is not only a nerd but he learned certain invaluable things like how to pronounce Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule-Zürich. After a brief stint in industry he is now an associate professor in the School of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology. where he is trying to prove that engineers can be funny and not funny-looking. Pete lectures internationally on the use of humor in technical communication and education and carries out research on the use of improvisational humor in improving creativity in engineering design. He currently directs a Living Learning Community at Georgia Tech entitled "Humor and Innovation" that examines the use of humor in technical communication, education and innovation. Pete also co-hosts *Inside the Black Box*, a weekly program on science and technology every Sun. from noon to 1pm on WREK 91.1FM in Atlanta. "Science, only funnier," is the motto of Pete and his co-host, fellow Georgia Tech professor and comedian, Bill Hunt, as they add a little humor to discussions of science and technology relevant to our everyday lives.



## ChemE Undergrads Represent at AIChE Regional Conference

During March 16 and 17, 2012, the undergraduate student chapter of AIChE attended the 2012 Northeast Student Regional Conference at the University of New Haven. Tim Chang, president of the Course X student chapter, reported Course X undergraduates won all three prizes at the undergraduate research paper competition:

- 1st Place: Carmen Chan
- 2nd Place: Nahyun Cho
- 3rd Place: Michelle Teplensky

Congratulations to all the student AIChE chapters on a successful meeting! ♦



# Blast from the Past

In the Spring 2012 edition, fellow alumni found friends and faculty in the posted photos:



(to the left) Amrit Jalan (SM '11) was the first to recognize professors Bill Deen and Preetinder Virk in this post-holiday skits photo.

(to the right) an anonymous contributor believes the ultimate frisbee player on the far right is Ted Nunn (SM '82).



Incredibly, Pete Ludovice (PhD '89) (featured on page 20) found himself in the Spring 2012 newsletter, along with friend and alumnus Jim Johnston (PhD '91) (at right). They are the trumpet player and keyboardist, respectively, in the holiday skit band to the left.



**Debi P. Mukherjee (SM '65, ChE '67, PhD '69) shared an image from his time at the Practice School. He writes:**

As I was looking the 2011 fall news from the Chem E dept where there was a picture of practice school attendees in 1965, I tried to find if I had a picture of our group attending the Chem E practice school. I found in one of my old files a copy of the picture of our group attending the practice school station in American Cyanamid Co. in Bound Brook NJ. Our station directors were Dr. Mike Modell in Bound Brook and Dr. Jon Valvert in Esso (now EXXON) in Linden NJ.

I hope this may be of interest to some of our alums.

*Do you have a photo you'd like to share? Email [chemealum@mit.edu](mailto:chemealum@mit.edu).*

## Here for Nine Weeks

### Six in M.I.T. Class

Six students are in the current class of the M.I.T. Practice School here at the plant. The engineers, who will be here for nine weeks of study, arrived February 8.

The group consists of Kenneth Sinclair of Ontario, Canada; Merle Ditz, Fryburg, Pa.; Avelino Rodriguez of Orense, Spain; Debi Mukherjee of West Bengal, India; Richard Goode of Wellesley, Mass.; and Herson Barreto of Lima, Peru.

This is the third class of the school year in the joint effort of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Bound Brook plant. After their stay here, the students spend an additional nine weeks at the Bayway Refinery Station of Esso Standard Oil Company. They are working toward their M.S. degrees in chemical engineering.



STUDENTS are (seated, l. to r.) Kenneth Sinclair, Merle Ditz, Avelino Rodriguez; (standing) Debi Mukherjee, Richard Goode, and Herson Barreto.

AMERICAN CYANAMID COMPANY FEBRUARY 26, 1965