

ENERGY AND PHOTON SCIENCES DIRECTORATE NEWSLETTER

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Volume 2, Issue 1

MEET OUR NEW COLLEAGUES:

Lucas Alameda, CFN
Brendon Benish, NSLS-II
Brandon Catalano, NSLS-II
Roberta Caruso, NSLS-II
Jianyu Guan, CFN
Lisa Housel, ISD
Marton Kalman Lajer, CMPSD
Aamna Khan, NSLS-II
Sabine Neal, CFN
Fabian Rennecke, CMPSD
Eric Softye, NSLS-II
Feiyue Teng, CFN
Brandon Yalin, NSLS-II

A MESSAGE FROM JIM

Our third quarterly newsletter, and the first one of the new year, comes while we are still in the midst of a global pandemic that is affecting all of our lives. The toll of forgoing the traditional family gatherings is immense and particularly difficult for members of our community whose families are in other countries. To those of you who have not seen parents, spouses or children because of travel restrictions to other countries, or need to take care of at-home children while working, or who live with members of vulnerable populations or who are members of vulnerable populations, or who have not seen aging parents because of living restrictions, the appreciation I have for your dedication under these conditions is profound. We are all working together to do important science by challenging frontiers in research and trying to provide a better future to people. We should not lose sight of our accomplishments, which are numerous.

In this newsletter, I would like to talk about the BNL [Employee Resource Groups](#) (ERGs) and our efforts to open dialogues among personnel at BNL. Our colleagues come from many locations, speak many different languages and have a wide variety of beliefs and learning about the diversity in our workplace and the challenges that many face is of paramount importance. I urge you to attend the events sponsored by these ERGs and Groups. They are [The African American Advancement Group](#), [The Pride Alliance](#), [The Early Career Resource Group](#), [Brookhaven Women in Science](#), [The Asian Pacific American Association](#), [The Hispanic Heritage Group](#) and the [Brookhaven Veteran's Association](#). We will be benefiting from a series of talks from representatives of these groups, and I encourage your attendance.

BNL, in response to the survey on caregiver needs, has a new lecture series to provide advice and resources as we all negotiate the current challenges. This is the BNL Caregivers Lunch and Learn Series and takes place the second Tuesday each month. Talks are currently scheduled for January 13 (Challenges of a Post-Quarantine Workplace: Adapting to the "Next Normal"), February 10 (Mental Skills Bootcamp: Performing at Your Best) and March 10 (Financial Planning in Uncertain Times) at noon. In addition, there is a webinar series from [Magellan Health](#) that is offered each month under the Caregiver series. Please refer to the [BNL calendar](#) for links to take advantage of these resources.



Jim Misewich

"We should not lose sight of our accomplishments, which are numerous"

IN THE DIRECTORATE

The EPSD [Peer Counselors](#) are members of the Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (IDE) Council and welcome conversations about any workplace concerns with EPSD employees and guests. Be assured that confidentiality is an utmost priority within the constraints of the law and Lab policy. We have a process for [anonymous messages](#) to the IDE Council and ALD on the IDE website.

BNL employees are required to have one IDE goal on your performance appraisal goalsetting document. To help, we have a web page with [suggested goals](#). Any goal that you find compelling and is related to I&D is acceptable if your supervisor agrees; creativity in the current environment is particularly needed.

In the New Year

This is the first EPSD newsletter of the new year. As we begin this year, the IDE Council and Jim would like to know where your priorities lie for the IDE Council programs and whether you have suggestions going forward. You can email Jim or any member of the Council directly or you can put it in the [anonymous messages](#) suggestion box found on the IDE web page (link). We are interested both in programs we can pilot (e.g., IDE performance goals, welcoming letters) and programs where we can provide support (e.g., International Woman's Day Program). Of particular interest are programs that take advantage of the electronic tools that we have used for the past 9-10 months. We have all learned valuable new skills and challenged our creativity; taking advantage of these lessons may be the good that comes out of a very difficult, often heartbreaking time. Please remember that any idea is worth considering. The IDE Council will respond to all ideas either directly if you choose to sign your email or on the "Ask Jim" page to anonymous communications.

Food Services at BNL

We now have food trucks coming on site three days a week. You can find the information (including online pre-ordering when available) on the [Guest Services Division website, Food Services](#). Menus are listed on the web page and pre-orders may be possible for some of the food trucks. The web page also lists places that will deliver food and groceries to BNL.

Highlight Your Group

We would like to update and personalize our IDE posters with photos of groups at BNL that illustrate diversity. Please send us your group pictures (composites are welcome) so that we can use them in new posters. By the way, while you are home or at work, you can still see and use our [IDE posters](#). They can be used in .pdf for slides. In addition, you are welcome to print them through illustration and use them at BNL. Ideas for new posters are always welcome.

It's All About Respect

An inclusive and diverse culture is rooted on mutual respect. For the last few decades inclusion and diversity have been coupled. Respect highly correlates with discrimination and harassment reports --- 90% of those who say they are not treated with respect report at least one of 35 different discrimination or harassment experiences at work (from [3 Requirements of a Diverse and Inclusive Culture-and Why They Matter for Your Organization](#)). For diversity to lead to an inclusive culture we need to create an environment where individuals are valued for their strengths and feel safe to express themselves. It is up to each one of us to clearly communicate our values and intentions and promote a culture of inclusion and diversity.

Keep up with Science at BNL

There have been talks at BNL that you may have missed in the current stress of adapting to the new normal in working and home. This quarter we would like to highlight a program from the Office of Educational Programming called Science Thursdays at BNL.

This is a series of video chats with scientists at BNL followed by a question and answer session. It is a chance to see the range of science that happens at BNL and see some of your colleagues talk about their passions.

Science Thursdays: [Quantum Science with Stuart Wilkins](#)

Science Thursdays: [Catalysts-Turning Greenhouse Pollutants into Useful Materials with Luis Betancourt](#)

Science Thursdays: [Radioisotope Development and Applications with Vanessa Sanders and Jasmine Hatcher](#)

Science Thursdays: [Plant Sciences and Biofuels with Jantana Keereetaweep](#)

Science Thursdays: [Nuclear Energy in Society with David Brown](#)

From the Working Group

The Working Group discussed all of your more than 800 comments in the CultureIQ survey and made a series of recommendations. One of these recommendations was that we share the achievements of our colleagues. In the last newsletter, we highlighted the spotlight winners from the past year. We plan to focus on the spotlight winners twice a year so you will see the achievements of your colleagues highlighted in the next newsletter. Once we can have in-person gatherings, we will add celebrations of these achievements twice each year.

In addition to feeling respected and safe to be oneself, inclusion means that staff feel empowered, supported, and included. To this end and in response to an expressed need for more informal settings to network and explore new collaborations across the Lab, the EPSD Working Group recommended that a coffee/social hour rotate between the different departments. The IDE council has asked that we implement a virtual version for this event. The Center for Functional Nanomaterials (CFN) would like to use [SpatialChat](#) for their first meeting and invite two or three researchers to informally share a bit about their research and how they could collaborate with others.

We hope that Jim Misewich and Joann Williams will kick off this activity on **Wednesday January 27 at 3 PM**, which will also allow staff to become familiar with SpatialChat and determine what type of license we need. CFN will hold the second session the last Wednesday in **February (2/24/21)**, and the Interdisciplinary Science Department will hold theirs the last **Wednesday in March (3/31/21)**. **All dates will be confirmed through meeting notifications sent to the division staff three weeks ahead of each session.**

Help us Welcome our New Colleagues to EPSPD:

Once again, we are introducing our newly hired colleagues to you. If you find common interests or places where you can assist, please do. Join with me in welcoming them to the Directorate:

Lucas Alameda, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Delamination of Novel Layered Materials

Supervisor: Anibal Boscoboinik

Email: lalameda@psu.edu

Start Date: 1/4/2021

Preferred Pronoun: He/Him

Interests: Golf, baking and chess.

Though, admittedly, I am terrible at all three! Professionally I am broadly interested in materials chemistry.



Brendon Benish, Mechanical Designer

Supervisor: Christopher Stelmach

Email: bbenish@bnl.gov

Start Date: 11/30/2020

Preferred Pronoun: He/Him

Interests: I had previously worked at NSLS-II as a job shopper. Before starting as a full time employee at BNL, I had been a Project Engineer for an Industrial leak Detection company on Long Island.

Brandon Catalano, Core Controls Student Assistant

Supervisor: Anton Derbenev

Email: bcatalano@bnl.gov

Start Date: 10/19/2020

Preferred Pronoun: He/Him

Interests: playing piano/guitar, watching and playing hockey (I am a huge New York Rangers fan), building computers, and hiking.



Roberta Caruso, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Cuprate Superconductors and High-TC Junctions

Supervisor: Ivan Bozovic

Email: rcaruso@bnl.gov

Start Date: 12/14/2020

Preferred Pronoun: She/Her

Interests: My main scientific interest is in superconducting materials with a background in low-noise, low-temperature characterization of interfaces and Josephson devices. Since my bachelor studies I have collaborated with learned societies, and I am extremely interested in outreach and science popularization events



in general. I am currently a member of the European Physical Society and of the Italian Physical Society and always curious about physics-related events. I am also a big fan of concerts, opera and performances in general (especially theater plays). I am a terrible singer and dancer, but I am a decent non-professional actress.

Jianyu Guan, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Oxide Molecular Beam Epitaxy

Supervisor: Ivan Bozovic

Email: jyguanww@outlook.com

Start Date: 12/14/2020

Lisa Housel, Electrical Power Engineer

Supervisor: Amy Marschilok

Email: lhousel@bnl.gov

Start Date: 10/13/2020

Preferred Pronoun: She/Her

Marton Kalman Lajer, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Condensed Matter Theory

Supervisors: Robert Konik/Alexei

Tsvelik

Email: lajer.marton@wigner.hu

Start Date: 1/4/2021

Preferred Pronoun: He/Him

Interests: I am a fresh physics Ph.D.

graduate of Eotvos Lorand University (Hungary, EU). My research so far focuses on quantum field theories in low dimensions, especially nonperturbative aspects, using analytical (e.g., integrability) and novel numerical methods. My comfort zone is the low-energy spectrum and finite volume properties of QFTs, but more recently I became interested in out-of-equilibrium phenomena in condensed matter systems. At BNL I also hope to deepen my knowledge on quantum computing and the utilization of artificial intelligence, especially machine learning.



Aamna Khan, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Accelerator Physics

Supervisor: Victor Smalyuk

Email: akhan1@bnl.gov

Start Date: 11/9/2020

Preferred Pronoun: She/Her



Sabine Neal, Research Associate, Materials Scientist

Supervisor: Samuel Tenney

Email: sneal10@vols.utk.edu

Start Date: 1/4/2021

Preferred Pronoun: She/Her

Fabian Rennecke, Condensed Matter Theory – Theoretical Approach

Supervisor: Alexei Tsvelik

Email: frennecke@bnl.gov

Start Date: 9/28/2020

Preferred Pronoun: He/Him

Interests: While I'm a new

employee I have been at BNL

since the Fall of 2017 as a long-term guest of the Nuclear Theory Department. I am very familiar with the Lab also in pre-pandemic times. I live in Astoria, Queens and



enjoy the food and culture of the city as much as possible. To me, the unpleasant commute is only a small price to pay. Aside from enjoying the many things the city has to offer, I recently took up climbing. So far I mostly do bouldering and have only done it in gyms but I am eager to try the real thing and climb outside!

Eric Softye, Mechanical Technician

Supervisor: John Trunk
Email: esoptye@bnl.gov
Start Date: 12/7/2020
Preferred Pronoun: He/Him

Feiyue Teng, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Biosensing with Designed Nanostructures

Supervisor: Oleg Gang
Email: fteng@bnl.gov
Start Date: 11/9/2020

Brandon Yalin, Research Engineer

Supervisor: Andi Barbour
Email: byalin@bnl.gov
Start Date: 12/21/2020
Preferred Pronoun: He/Him
Interests: I have my Bachelors of Science in Physics and Mathematics from Stony Brook University where I



graduated early with cum laude honors in December 2017. I have interned at BNL under the SULI internship at the CFN performing optical simulations for ultrathin silicon solar cell models. My journey after university led me to working in the laser industry where I was a laser engineer for the research and development group at Photonics Industries. While there, my work focused on developing both solid state and fiber picosecond laser systems. Now I will begin my work at the Lab within the SXSS program under Andi Barbour and Stuart Wilkens as a research engineer. Outside of professional work, my personal interests are rooted mainly in music and outdoor activities. I am an avid guitar player and hiker as well as a local coach for a youth soccer team within the Longwood school district.



Members of the EPS IDE Council (clockwise from top): Diane Cabelli, Michael Cowell, Betsy Hanson, Vivian Stojanoff, Grace Webster, John Tranquada and Jing Tao

Contact Us:
Linda Hanlon
Building 460
(631) 344-7517
hanlon@bnl.gov
<https://www.bnl.gov/energysci/>