



"Developing Outstanding Ideas and Individuals... One at a time."

ARG Alumni Newsletter Summer '08

1. Greetings

Hello again ARG alumni! It is great to be back in contact with you. It's been a very busy Spring semester with a lot of changes going on. As we'll detail in a bit, several ARG members transitioned into post-grad school positions. This was probably one of, if not **the** largest exodus we've had since I've been here at UIUC. We'll try to catch you up on all the changes that occurred and some of the nifty new things that happened. As always, you can check the individual student web pages on the ARG website and/or check out the "What's New" section leading off the ARG website at <http://mr-roboto.me.uiuc.edu>.

2. Who's New?

Well, as you'll see in the Transitions section, there were a lot of people who left ARG. We had 13 people in here over Spring 08 which was a lot. Possibly the most we've had here. While it was great having all of the high achieving ARG members here, it was also quite a strain on yours truly just keeping up with every one. Therefore, as folks moved on, we didn't quite replace all of them. The goal was to get under 10 ARG members. Therefore, we were very careful in who we brought on. To date, there is only one new grad student and one post doc who'll be coming later in the Fall. Currently, we're looking for 1 more person to fill a particular need but at this point they haven't been

identified yet. We should have that figured out, plus an introduction of the new post doc, by the time the Winter newsletter comes along.

The new graduate student is Yangmin Xie. Yanmin joins us from Beihang University in Beijing. Behihan used to be known as the Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics. Ms. Xie received both her undergraduate and M.S. degree from Beihang. Her M.S. research was on the dynamics and control of machining processes. She's currently working on a project in collaboration with John Deere as part of their new John Deere Technology and Innovation Center. (http://www.deere.com/en_US/newsroom/2008/releases/corporate/17jun2008_fundcenter.html). Her research is on controlling header height which has been a large challenge in the industry for quite a while. You can read more about her on her ARG website.



3. Accomplishments

As always, we like to keep you all updated about what we're doing here so that you can still speak with pride about being a part of the ARG family. Here we just give a brief update on some of the more notable things that have occurred to ARG members since the last time we wrote.

- After finishing up a post doc in the NanoCEMMS, Doug Bristow accepted a

position as an Assistant Professor at his alma mater, now re-named Missouri University of Science and Technology. That's great!

- Brandon Hency defended and deposited his Ph.D.
- After finishing up a post doc as part of the NSF ERC on Compact & Efficient Fluid Power, Brandon Hency accepted an Assistant Professor position at Cornell University. That's great!
- Neera Jain Received the Eugene and Lina Abraham Fellowship from the MechSE department at UIUC.
- Tom McKinley received the UIUC College of Engineering Henry Ford Scholarship.
- David Hoelzle passed his Qualifying Exam.
- Prof. Alleyne received the 2008 College of Engineering Teaching Excellence Award
- Prof. Alleyne received the 2008 Campus Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Education.
- Prof. Alleyne received the Gustus Larson Award from ASME.

If you know any of the people mentioned above, feel free to drop them an e-mail in the lab and say congrats. Also, you can check our ARG homepage regularly to find out whether any new news has come through.

4. Transitions.

We had a lot of people that moved on from ARG this Spring/Summer. While it's sad to see them go, it's also really cool to see them striking out on their own.

As mentioned, Doug and Melissa and Zoe (& LILY!) packed up and headed down to Missouri. Doug got to experience all the joys of home buying first hand. Now they have a great big house in Columbia just begging for visitors if any of you are in the area. Doug's new coordinates can be found at <http://mae.mst.edu/facultyandstaff/facultybristow.html>.

Brandon Hency finished up his Ph.D. and stuck around for a while as a post doc with the NSF Fluid Power Center. Upon finishing that post doc earlier this summer he had a

couple options....so he took both. Right now he's in Hartford, CT on a 1 year post-doc type assignment to United Technologies Research Center. He'll be working on large scale energy systems; something he got more into towards the end of his Ph.D. After he's done with that, he will be moving to Ithaca, NY to start as an Assistant Prof in the MAE department at Cornell.

Below is a picture of both Brandon and Doug at graduation this past May. It was very windy and stormy. You can see the tassels blowing around.



Serena Tyson traded in her grad student clothes and hours for a set of fatigues and camo. She turned in her M.S. thesis and then headed down to Virginia to begin basic training as a 1st Lt. in the Marine Corps. Ooo rah! While her new job will be very different than grad school, she still figures to use some of the analytical problem solving skills in the military. After basic training, she'll be going to flight school where she'll learn to fly different types of aircraft. She's hoping for jets we think. The ARG lab decided to send her off with a nice little party by her pool. Now the current ARG members are in need of someone to move into and apartment complex with a pool so we can have more neat pool parties in the summers ☺



Scott Manwaring and Brian Helfrich both graduated this summer with their M.S. theses. Interestingly enough, they're moving together across country and both of them will be working at Sandia National Labs. Feel free to look them up if you're in Albuquerque, NM. Their e-mail contact info should be on mr-roboto.

Xiaohui Xiao, or Sophia as we knew her, finished up her 1 year visiting scholar position with us at ARG and returned to her home institution: Wuhan University. It was great to have her here. Along with Brian Helfrich they made a very good team for precision motion control of nanopositioners.

5. Now for something completely different!

So, you ARG alumni have proven yourselves to be both illustrious, successful....and very, very sneaky ☺ Earlier this year, ARG alumni led by Rong Zhang, Sean Brennan, and Paul Kawka surprised Prof. Alleyne by doing something completely unexpected. They established an endowed fund to support future ARG members. The financial support for this fund will come from ARG alumni donations and eventually it will be funded at a level that will provide continuous support of an ARG student.

This initiative and generosity were incredible, to say the least. This type of thing does happen in universities. However, former students usually set up an endowment to honor their previous research group after the retirement (or demise!) of the advisor. Having something happen so early is a great testament to the wonderful group of people that make up the ARG 'family.'



Now for the sneaky part. The ARG folks sprung this on Prof. Alleyne as a complete surprise. Marina Tharayil came to town one day and insisted that we all go out for lunch. At lunch, there was a surprise teleconference with many of the ARG alumni and Marina presented Prof Alleyne with the draft of the agreement. Prof Alleyne was floored. There have been very few times in my life when he has been at a loss for words but this was one of those times. Here's a picture of Marina giving the draft agreement with Rong, Paul, Dave, etc. on the other end of the phone. Thanks to all of you who helped to make this happen! Wow!



For details on the ARG Alumni Research Fund, you can contact Rong Zhang or Paul Kawka or Sean Brennan. Alternately, you can contact Chip Jorstad at MechSE or just go online at:

http://www.mechse.illinois.edu/content/for/alumni/gifts/make_a_gift.php

6. Catching up

As usual, we can start with the new arrivals. Matt Polley and wife Becky welcomed a new boy into the extended ARG family on January 19th 2008. His name was Cameron Michael Polley. Notice that Matt was able to have a boy since he'd been gone from the ARG lab for a sufficient time before he started the family.



Matt is still at MPC Products, but instead of working as Controls Engineer, as he had originally started, he's a Systems Engineer. His current role is as MPC's Lead Engineer on a project they are working on with NASA, titled SOFIA. Here's a link to the NASA project website (http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/SOFIA/index.html). Basically, it's a modified 747SP, retrofitted to contain an infrared telescope, to be used as a flying astronomy lab. They designed, built, and are currently testing the drive system for the open telescope cavity.



As you can kind of see in the photo above, Doug and Melissa welcomed a new addition to their family. Lily Joanna was born March 8th. Since little Lily was born before they moved to Missouri, they had to conform to the ARG baby-gender trend and have a girl. Shown here are Lily and Dad.

Another ARG member who's been adding to his family is Yisheng Zhang. Yisheng is still working for Parker Hannifin. His wife and he welcomed a baby girl, Angela, on July 1st of this year. Here's a picture of little Angela when she was only 6 days old. So cute! The fact that they had a girl can't be blamed on the ARG baby-gender trend since Yisheng had been gone long enough from ARG.



Danian Zheng and his family (wife Ping) moved over to Greenville, SC last Oct. Both Ping and Danian joined GE Energy Advanced Technology Operations. Now Danian is leading GE's next generation wind turbine structures and sensor development and Ping is fast-tracking it up the management ladder there. Here's a picture of Harry and Maya, their two kids. (see, the boy came later, after the ARG baby-gender thingy wore off).



Other non baby news involved Alex Montgomery. Here we catch up with him and his girlfriend on a hill overlooking Florence,

Italy. Very nice. Apparently Olivia tolerates Alex's taste for David Byrne. The same cannot be said for his Hasselhof passion. Alex is working on that one.



There seems to be something about ARG members and Italy. Here's a shot of Brandon Hency atop the Duomo in Firenze, Italy with his beau, Michelle.



Finally, here's a really neat way to spend your job. Prof. Sean Brennan took his students out and demonstrated vehicle dynamics up close and personal earlier this winter. This was high speed maneuvering on a test track; probably demonstrating some serious understeer. I believe that's actually the family car that was used for the demonstration. I wonder if their insurance covered that ☺?



One more bit of breaking news. Rui Liu has decided to abandon the California lifestyle and return right back here to Champaign-Urbana. He'll be working at the NCSA.

That's all the news I have right now. Please, please, please send back information about yourselves and what you're doing. It's great for other ARG alumni to just know what each other is up to. It's also great for current ARG members to know what's waiting for them once they complete their time here. I'll look forward to hearing from all of you. Take care and have a great Fall!