

Dan the Man

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Happy Birthday, Dan!

- I would like to wish a very happy belated to 60th to my friend and fellow New Jersey inhabitant Dan Bienstock

Personal Talk

- I thought I would give a talk about Dan's personal history
- I think it's interesting
- Reactions were mixed...

E-Mail #1 from Jeff

Thanks Jonathan!

Non-technical content is perfectly fine.

E-Mail #2 from Jeff

Based on your abstract, I think your talk would be a GREAT concluding talk.

E-Mail #1 from Dan

Jon, you could also give a talk about your research! People will be interested!

E-Mail #2 from Dan

But you could also talk about your research!
I would like that!

Some Parallels

Dan	Jonathan
Father left Germany in late 30s	Father left Germany in late 30s
Got into computers and math in high school	Got into computers and math in high school
Majored in math in college near Boston	Majored in math in college near Boston
Got a doctorate at the MIT OR Center	Got a doctorate at the MIT OR Center
Worked in research for a tech company, but then...	Worked in research for a tech company, but then...
Got a faculty job in the NY/NJ area	Got a faculty job in the NY/NJ area

Some Parallels

Dan	Jonathan
Married a Brandeis graduate	Married a Brandeis graduate
Does more computer coding than most OR researchers	Does more computer coding than most OR researchers
Father of 3 sons	Father of 2 sons
Drives a white dual-motor Tesla Model 3 with white interior	Ordered a white dual-motor Tesla Model 3 with black interior
Editor-in-Chief of <i>Mathematical Programming Computation</i> 2014-2018	Editor-in-Chief of <i>Mathematical Programming Computation</i> 2019-

Deeper Similarities

- Dan and I both feel strongly about the relationship between applied mathematics and computing
- Both feel that computer programming needs to be strongly integrated into how we
 - Train researchers
 - Perform research
 - Present results
- No surprise that we have both been editors-in-chief of *Mathematical Programming Computation*

Both of our Lives Were Shaped by World War II

- My own father was sent alone out of Germany (without my grandparents) at age 12-13
- From a town about 1 hour North of Frankfurt
- To a foster family in Columbus, Ohio

- All of Dan's grandparents got out of Europe in the 30's, *with* Dan's parents (as children)
- They all went to...

Uruguay (from Berlin)

- Dan's father's family was from Berlin
- They just decided to take a boat to South America
- But “the exact destination was not always clear”



From Poland

- Dan's mother's family was from Poland
- In an area long disputed between Prussia/Germany and Russia
- "At the time of her parents' birth it was German."
- "When she was born it was Polish, with a lot of tension."
- "My Mom's father (and other male relatives) were arrested by the Russians during WWI on suspicion of being German spies."
- Dan's mother's family also went to Uruguay
- Separately but similarly

In Uruguay

- Dan's parents met in Uruguay
- "I grew up in Uruguay."
- "There was a lot of German at home and as a little boy I had an accent (in Spanish) and had to see a speech therapist."
- "My throat still hurts from attempting multiple rr words while using the German 'r' "

Math, Computers and Brandeis

- “I went to the public schools in Uruguay (excellent) and while a teenager I became strongly interested in mathematics and computer science (meaning programming).
 - Question: I wonder what computers and languages he used there
- “Brandeis accepted me with financial aid (including work, loans, etc) and this was something my family could afford. So I came to Brandeis, and never regretted what followed!”

Sorry, Now a Little Bit About Me

- I tried going to grad school in Mechanical Engineering at Stanford in fall 1982
- But I hated what the engineers did to mathematics and switched to OR (which I had just discovered -- another story)
- I found the Stanford engineering doctoral students **rather dull**
- In February 1984, I entered the MIT OR doctoral program

Meeting Dan

- One of the first fellow students I met at the MIT OR Center (ORC) was Dan

Our First Meeting

- Dan was hunched over a computer terminal (we still had those), typing a mass of characters

```
.....  
.....  
.....:/-----\  
.....|+++++++|.....  
.....|+++--+++++--+++|.....
```

etc.

- “What’s that?”, I said, “A contour map of some nonlinear function?”

Our First Meeting

- “No,” he said, “it is the face of Professor Dimitri Bertsekas.”
- OK, I realized, this person may be many things, but not dull...

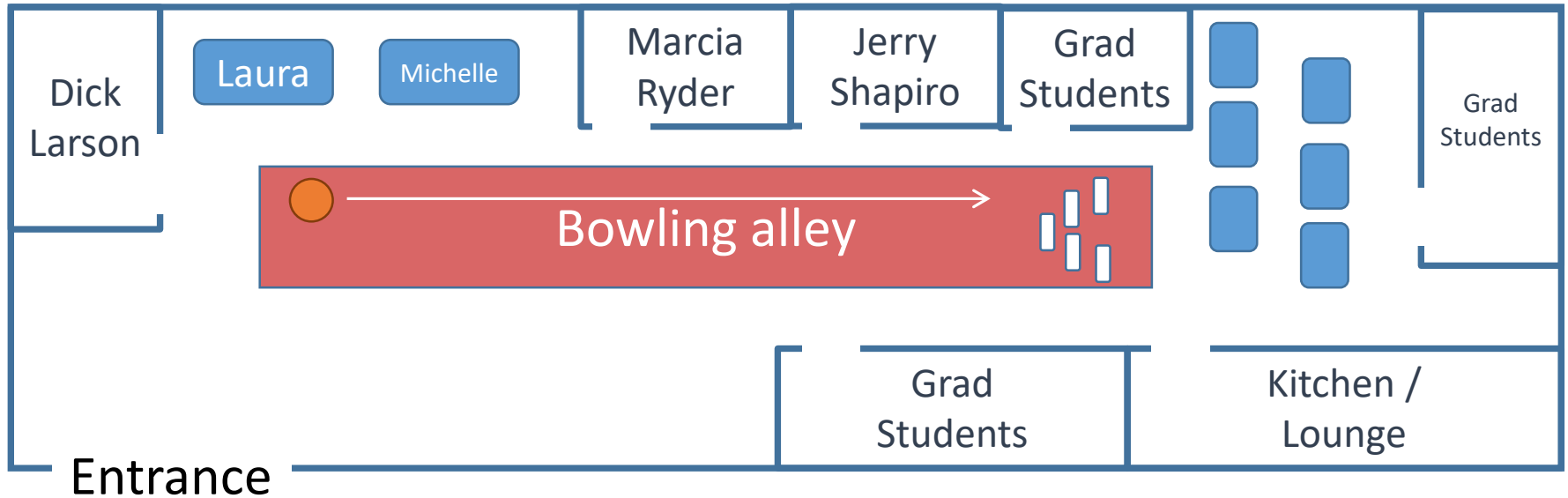
The ORC and Paul Tseng


- Dan created a “festive” atmosphere at the ORC
- He had a tendency to tease Paul Tseng
- Paul (may he RIP 🥹) was very intense about both his work and his hobbies
- The teasing did not seem to bother him
- I am not sure he even realized he was being teased

Paul and Mannequin-Paul

- Paul was really “into” continuous optimization
- But also played many sports
- In his grad student cubicle he had
 - A basketball
 - A tennis racket
 - Full hockey gear (he mostly grew up in Vancouver and did his undergrad work at Queens College in Ontario)
 - Sports clothes and running gear
- One day when Paul was out, Dan assembled these items into Paul’s chair, making a simulated mannequin-Paul, sitting in his chair

The ORC as Modified by Dan



 = Grad student cubicles

(Using Paul's equipment)

Summary

- Dan has been my friend since grad school
 - Which means over 35 years
- I like to think that I am not a boring person
- As you know, Dan is **definitely not** a boring person
- And in grad school he was **definitely, definitely not** a boring person
- And he has an interesting background
- Thanks, Dan!
- And happy birthday!