



NEWSLETTER

Mission Statement: The Association for Women in Science, Inc. (AWIS) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the achievement of equity and full participation of women in all areas of science and technology.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Fellow AWIS-SD Members and Friends,

I hope that you all are doing well and that your 2012 is off to a productive and gratifying start! AWIS San Diego’s 2012 activities have been fun and educational. I hope that you’ve had a chance to attend some of these and invite you to check out our website calendar and bi-weekly event emails for up-coming events. We were fortunate to have had two energetic and informative speakers present so far this year. Teresa Larsen gave a presentation entitled “Science in Popular Culture: The Scientist’s Role” that I found to be engaging and thought-provoking. Sheryl Roush “sparkled” and educated us at February’s Strategy Session entitled “Get Connected: Networking and Social Media.” You can read more about these events in this Newsletter edition. Thanks to our Events and Strategy Sessions Committees for organizing these!

Are you interested in AWIS-SD Outreach activities? Well, ‘tis the season for those fun opportunities! Our Outreach Committee and other AWIS-SD members recently participated in the Expanding Your Horizons Conference for 6th-10th grade girls on Saturday, March 3rd at USD. Up-coming is the San Diego Science & Engineering Fair poster judging for AWIS-SD awards at Balboa Park starting at noon on Wednesday, March 21st. Also, AWIS-SD will have a hands-on exhibit at the San Diego Science Festival Expo Day on Saturday, March 24th at Petco Park. These are all terrific opportunities for you to represent AWIS-SD and interact with young girls in our community to inspire their interests in science, technology, engineering, and math. You can read more details about these Outreach activities on our website’s “up-coming events” section. All volunteers are enthusiastically welcomed! If you’d like to participate, please register on our website by clicking on the event title (calendar or “up-coming events” section) or email the Outreach Committee at outreach@awissd.org to get more information.

Save the date of May 3rd for our biennial Scholarship Gala, during which we will have a keynote speaker and present our 2012 Scholarship Awardees. Our Gala Committee is planning a lovely event at the La Jolla Woman’s Club, and our Scholarship Committee is busy reviewing ~100 applications to select deserving scholarship winners. Members and non-members watch your AWIS-SD emails

for more details and take advantage of the Early Bird Discount registration period!

Welcome to our new AWIS-SD members! If you are not yet an AWIS-SD member, please consider joining us in 2012 so that you can enjoy members-only benefits such as monthly Coffee Clubs, six Strategy Sessions and one Focus Session per year, admission to our LinkedIn group, free admission to most events, and discounted rates for the Scholarship Gala and Holiday Social. When you sign up at the AWIS National website (www.awis.org), remember to sign up for membership in the San Diego Chapter.

As always, feel free to contact me at president@awissd.org if you have any questions, comments or suggestions about/for our chapter.

Most sincerely,
Dody
 Dorothy (Dody) Sears

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February Strategy Session: Get Connected - Networking and Social Media

By Merrie Mosedale

AWIS members and nonmembers alike enjoyed learning about networking and social media during the February Strategy Session. The session was organized by Committee members Hoang Nhan and Maha Gebara and hosted by Jones Day. Science writer Lynne Friedmann sponsored the event.

The evening started with an overview of social media presented by Strategy Sessions Committee Chair Margo Streets. Many attendees were familiar with the use of social media for professional networking, but shared that they experienced several challenges in networking both online and at networking events. These difficulties included crafting a public profile, making new connections, and maintaining connections after a networking event. Streets discussed how to approach these challenges and maximize the use of LinkedIn in particular as a professional networking tool.

Later in the event, guest speaker Sheryl Roush, President and CEO of Sparkle Presentations, provided information on effective networking communication. Roush directed a group activity in which attendees answered a series of questions to reveal their proficiency in different communication modalities. The seven modalities were linguistic, mathematical, visual, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. According to Roush, use of each modality is essential for effective public speaking. Identifying and improving on areas of weakness can help interpersonal communication, especially in a job interview. Roush closed the evening by giving tips for how to approach communicating at a networking event, such as having a clearly defined mission. Roush also recommended trying the educational organization, Toastmasters, for improving communication skills.

AWIS San Diego Lecture and Networking Event: Science in Popular Culture: The Scientist's Role

By Nurith Amitai and Marianna Tcherpakov

“What got you interested in science in the first place?” This question opened the lecture by Teresa Larsen on “Science in Popular Culture: The Scientist's Role,” and formed an anchor point to which the speaker returned throughout the presentation. The lecture constituted the highlight of a networking event organized by AWIS San Diego on January 30. The event focused on the contribution of scientists to popular culture and the responsibility that comes with it. Larsen, director of the Foundation for Scientific Literacy, used the question about what made audience members pursue a science career to demonstrate a useful approach to communicating about science with non-scientists. By remembering the event, the person, or the coincidence that had first led us to science, we are taken back to the time before we were scientists. She recommended that we imagine explaining our findings to our younger, non-scientist self, and then talk to other non-scientists in much the same way.

Such communication skills are crucial because, as Larsen emphasized, communication about science is important not only within the scientific community, but even more for the general public. Educating people about our discoveries and the work that we do has a tremendous impact on other aspects of society. Larsen illustrated this with a Venn diagram depicting numerous aspects of society that are affected by, and in turn affect, science. The main examples included the interface of science with politics, religion, and the education system. Media and popular culture play an important role in these interactions: distorted depictions of scientists and misinterpretations of scientific data can lead to negative public opinions about scientific progress and research in general.

Larsen stressed the responsibility that scientists carry in ensuring successful communication about science. The audience was treated to several cautionary examples of misleading media reports about science, such as a series of newspaper headlines twisting the identification of endogenous steroids limiting the growth of Arabidopsis plants into tales of scientists developing “no-mow lawns” or even “plotting to eliminate lawn mowers.” Larsen explained that such distortions occur because reporters need to focus on how a given scientific finding will affect society. Scientists must be prepared to explain why their data are important to the general public, Larsen admonished; if they do not, journalists will fill in the gap, often with erroneous confabulations.

One valuable communication tool that Larsen recommended was visualization. Her own slides provided concrete examples of simple, memorable graphic representations of key ideas. While well-

executed graphs for our data were a good start, she explained, ideally scientists should go beyond that, with videos etc. bringing scientific ideas to life in easy-to-grasp ways.

The audience participated actively in the discussion, suggesting ways in which researchers can affect current and future policies and legislation, the education of future generations, and other related subjects. In summary, this event was not only a great opportunity to network and get to know AWIS members and non-members, it also presented a chance to exchange views on many science-related issues and dilemmas.

Readers interested in the work of the Foundation for Scientific Literacy can find out more at <http://www.scientificliteracy.org>.

Featured Alumna of Scripps Institution of Oceanography on Facebook: Patty Anderson



Patty Anderson graduated from the University of California San

AWIS SD Member Patty Anderson

Diego (UCSD) in 1996 with a B.S. in Earth Science/Chemistry and from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO) in 2000 with a M.Sc. in Earth Science.

She writes: “I have had a great career thanks to my SIO experience. I spent many hours playing in the waves while my Foram samples were soaking in the lab in old Ritter Hall. When I was an undergraduate I worked with Dr. Devendra Lal. Sometimes he would forget what time of day it was. One time his wife called him at 11 pm and told him to let me go home. He thought it was 11 am and had a lot of work planned for me to do. Thanks to his wife’s good sense of timing I got some sleep before classes the next morning.”

“Another time I worked with Dr. Miriam Kastner. At one point there were 5 female students/workers in her lab that were all pregnant at the same time. So she hired a male and shortly after he started his wife became pregnant. Must have been something in the lab.”

“I have been a freeway flier for the last 12 years and currently teach classes at Mira Costa, Cal State San Marcos, Palomar and UCSD Extension.”

Check her out at

Mira Costa College <http://www.miracosta.edu/home/panderson>

Cal State San Marcos <http://courses.csusm.edu/es100pa>

Palomar College <http://daphne.palomar.edu/panderson>

Movie Review: We Need to Talk About Kevin

By Marianna Tcherpakov

Recently, I had the chance to see the movie “We Need to Talk About Kevin.” Although I have not experienced motherhood yet, this story made me think about how much genetics or our so-called hereditary traits affect our future relationships, connections and lives in general. Do we really stand a chance against “biology,” and how much of a real impact do education and family have on our life? The movie is based on a novel written by Lionel Shriver, and although has elements of thriller and suspense, it is not a new “Omen” flick. It talks about the difficult relationship between a mother and her son, and how this dysfunctional connection leads up to a big tragedy. Played by the amazing Tilda Swinton, this mother finds herself in a situation where, in spite of her best efforts, her son commits an unspeakable crime: the massacre of his schoolmates and his own family. The main question I found myself asking: was it all her fault? Since we have a chance to see him grow up, I found myself thinking more and more that he was actually “born this way,” and that there was no escape from what happened later. Did the mother actually stand a chance against this “natural born killer”? The movie falls under category of psychological thriller and may well serve as educational material for a discussion of sociopathic behavior. But for me, this well-crafted story also raised a sort of “scientific” question: if some individuals are “programmed” or predisposed to act this way, what can be done to understand and prevent the next tragedy? Could killer tendencies be diagnosed genetically? Mental illnesses are complex and still not well understood. But I think that movies like this may open new discussions about the interplay of heredity and our personal conscience and choices.

Course Announcement

SCIENCE WRITING I

UCSD Extension

9 meetings (April 5 – May 31, 2012)

This course will benefit both those seeking to make a career transition to science writing as well as those with no intention of ever leaving the bench but who wish to be more effective writers. For those exploring alternative careers, this course is an intro to science journalism with a focus on writing techniques and strategies to engage the general reader. Also covered are opportunities for science writing, constraints that shape science coverage, ethical issues governing science reporting, and the cultural place of science in society. For scientists wishing to hone communication skills, lay-level explanations of science are often the key to effectively explaining the broader implications and applications of scientific discoveries to key audiences such as colleagues, collaborators in other disciplines, funding agency and foundation officers, donors, your institution’s leaders, corporate partners, students, legislators, your family and friends, journalists, and the public. Learn the tools and techniques to reach all these audiences effectively. The course is taught by Lynne Friedmann, AWIS Fellow, who brings a wealth of experience from her successful career as a freelance science writer and science communications consultant. Visit <http://bit.ly/9cFLLy> to enroll. You can also contact Lynne at LFriedmann@nasw.org with questions about the course

Upcoming Events

Mid-Career Coffee Club

March 15, 2012, 07:45am - 09:00am, food court at northwest corner of Scranton Rd. and Mira Mesa Blvd. Informal forum for AWIS-SD members in leadership and/or management positions to openly discuss issues faced on a daily basis. For more information contact rsoloff@awissd.org

Book Club

March 15, 2012, 06:00pm - 08:00pm, Elijah’s at 8861 Villa La Jolla Drive. We will be discussing the *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot. All are welcome. You do not have to be a member of AWIS, and you do not have to have finished reading the book to participate. Contact Ray Seraydarian

The Greater San Diego Science & Engineering Fair Judge Day

March 21, 2012, 12:00pm - 02:30pm, Balboa Park Activity Center. Each spring, the San Diego chapter of AWIS (AWIS-SD) judges and selects its own award winners during the Professional Organizations section of the Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair (www.gsdsef.org). Volunteers from AWIS-SD judge science fair projects submitted by middle school and high school girls from San Diego and Imperial Counties. The AWIS award winners are selected immediately following judging. A reception for the AWIS award winners is held in the month following the fair. This is an opportunity to interact with some really enthusiastic, young scientific ladies.

Contact: Julie Bordowitz: outreach@awissd.org

Coffee Club – Working Moms

March 23, 2012, 07:45am - 08:45am, Nobel Park - 8810 Judicial Drive, San Diego, CA 92121

If you are a working mom, please join us for our morning walk. We will make our way to a local cafe while sharing our experiences with juggling a career and being a mom. After you register, we will forward additional details regarding our meeting location.

Contact: Jennifer Cho and Corine Lau

San Diego Science Festival-Expo Day

March 24, 2012, 09:30am - 05:30pm, Petco Park

Each year in March, the San Diego Festival of Science and Engineering invites students and their families to engage in a weeklong celebration of careers in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) at PETCO Park. Our goal is to encourage and inspire students of all ages and backgrounds to pursue STEM education and careers by connecting them with scientists, educators, and engineers. Get involved, and help us inspire the next generation of scientist and engineers!

The AWIS-SD booth will demo our famous "oobleck" activity. We will need volunteers for 2 hrs shifts.

Contact: Nellie Shaul: nshaul@ucsd.edu and Kayan Tam: kaytam28@gmail.com

Member News

Lydiane Funkelstein got married to Randall Doner on 25th September 2011. The wedding was held in Heritage Park. Lydiane is an AWIS member and a Project Scientist in Neuroscience at the University of California San Diego.

**About the AWIS Newsletter**

The AWIS-SD Newsletter is published six times per year and provides AWIS members and supporters with information on Chapter activities, career development, and issues related to women in science.

Newsletter staff for March/April issue:

Nurith Amitai, Kerri Hebard-Massey, Tiffany Hernandez, Alka Malhotra, Denise McKee, Molly Moloney, Janice Payne, Emily Plummer, Pat Rarus, Shweta Sharma, and Geetha Srinivasan

Contribute to the Newsletter

If you are an AWIS-SD member, we encourage you to contribute to the newsletter. Please send articles, photographs, and member news as MS Word attachments to newsletter@awissd.org. News articles should not exceed 250 words, event summaries should not exceed 500 words, and feature articles (special-interest stories and profiles) should not exceed 1000 words. The submission deadline for the next issue is **April 10, 2012**.

AWIS-San Diego Sponsors

AWIS-SD thanks our corporate sponsors for their generous support. Donations from corporate sponsors help us fund scholarship awards, monthly events and Strategy Sessions, community outreach efforts, the Newsletter and the website.

For more information about how your company can support AWIS-SD, send e-mail to fundAWISsd@gmail.com.

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IMPORTANT CONTACTS**AWIS Board**

	<u>Name</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
President	Dorothy Sears	President@awissd.org
Past President	Jenny Chaplin	Pastpresident@awissd.org
Treasurer	Aparna Aiyer	Treasurer@awissd.org
Secretary	Linda Manza	Secretary@awissd.org
Members at Large	Rachel Soloff	rsoloff@awissd.org
	Diane Retallack	dretallack@awissd.org
	Anita Iyer	aiyer@awissd.org
	Grace Nakayama	gnakayama@awissd.org

To contact the Board, visit the following website:

<http://sdawis.org/about-awis-san-diego/board-members-awis>

Committee

	<u>Chair(s)</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
Corporate Sponsorship	Anneke Raney Erin Dunn	CorporateSponsorship@awissd.org
Events	Monica Brown	Events@awissd.org
Newsletter	Kristine Briedis Nurith Amitai Denise McKee	Newsletter@awissd.org
Outreach	Julie Bordowitz Sam Stout	Outreach@awissd.org
Public Relations	Lisa Fong Hoang Nhan	PublicRelations@awissd.org
Scholarship	Uromi Goodale Cheryl Okumura	Scholarship@awissd.org
Strategy Sessions & Focus Sessions	Grace Nakayama Kai Zhang	StrategySessions@awissd.org
Website	Corine Lau Laurence Fourgeaud	Website@awissd.org