

AWIS 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.

Upcoming AWIS Events

By Janice Payne

Start the New Year off right with our first AWIS event of 2003. On **Tuesday, January 14**, AWIS board member Barbara Coleman will present "Promote Yourself: Resume Writing for Advancing in a New or Present Position." Barbara is a professional recruiter who has been placing scientists in companies across the US for over four years. This event will be held at Ligand Pharmaceuticals from 6-8 p.m. You may RSVP by sending an email to Tracy Vivemore at tracyviv@aol.com by January 10, 2003.

In **February 2003**, we'll have back-to-back events on **February 10 and 11**. AWIS National President Jill Sideman will be in town for a presentation to the San Diego chapter on **February 10** from 6-8 p.m. at the Salk Institute. Don't miss a chance to hear what's going on at National. Watch the AWIS website for RSVP information.

On **February 11**, AWIS joins Athena, WISE and UCSD for an event featuring Elga Wasserman, author of the book Door in the Dream: Conversations with Eminent Women in Science, based on her interviews with women members of the National Academy of Sciences. This event features a lecture by the author from 6-7pm, followed by a reception at 7pm. The lecture and reception are free. This event is being held at the Copley International Conference Center, Institute of the Americas, on the UCSD campus. Parking is \$3. Registration may be done online at <http://www.jacobsschool.ucsd.edu/wasserman>. Directions and a map are featured on the website. Hope to see you at these AWIS events!

Also on February 11, 2003, there will be a non-AWIS event sponsored by UCSD Extension. Dava Sobel, author of Galileo's Daughter and Longitude, will offer dramatic insights into Galileo and his world-shaking scientific discoveries from the perspective of Galileo's remarkable daughter, Virginia. Registration fee for this event is \$35.00 (no refunds or discounts.) When registering, use section ID number 038299. For more information call: (858) 534-3400 or visit the website: <http://revelleforum.ucsd.edu/sobel.htm>.

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New Year's Letter 2003

A Message from the President

By Anna-Maria Hays

Happy New Year, AWIS-San Diego!! I hope everyone has had a wonderful, yet restful holiday season. It is a particularly great pleasure for me to address you on the threshold of 2003 as AWIS-San Diego has matured into an extraordinary organization. Thanks to many dedicated volunteers we have increased our membership, expanded our outreach programs, provided a diverse range of events, raised significant funds for our scholarships, launched our website (just to name a few accomplishments), and as such provided a means for our members to interact and learn from each others' experiences and strengths. AWIS-SD has become a successful resource for women in San Diego due to the enthusiasm and commitment of our volunteers. They have set a prime example of how individuals can help shape and contribute to our organization, thus allowing AWIS-SD to grow to its fullest potential. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone from committee members, committee chairs to the board, for the time and energy they have given to AWIS. I applaud your passion and vision. I hope that all AWIS members will follow your example and add to their New Year's resolution something related to furthering the goals and objectives of AWIS-SD. Again, I wish everyone a very Happy New Year, and may 2003 be as exciting and successful as 2002.

Girl Scouts Find Outreach Committee's Stolen Candy

By Jodi L. Connolly

On Saturday, November 2nd, four brave Outreach Committee members, Alycen Nigro, Karin Lucas, Tammy Lindell, and Jodi Connolly, represented AWIS at "Girl Scouts Career Day," which was attended by over 300 Girl Scouts. The yearly event, organized by Girl Scout Leader Jan Alacardi, took place at St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church in San Diego. The event drew participants with a wide variety of careers, from ballerinas and rodeo stars, to airline and police employees.

The Outreach Committee answered questions about their careers while promoting enthusiasm for science with a hands-on science activity developed by Karin Lucas. Given that the event occurred just after Halloween, the premise of the experiment was to determine which monster stole the Outreach committee's candy. The only clue was the slime trail left by the monster that stole the candy. Each girl was given a piece of filter paper containing a sample of the monster's slime (which in actuality was a dot made by two markers of different colors). Their job was to perform chromatography by comparing the unknown slime sample with the known colors they added to the filter paper. The filter paper was placed in a jar with a little bit of water, and the jar's lid was closed. As the mobile phase (water) carried the felt tip pen marks through the stationary phase (the filter paper), each color migrated a different distance depending on its solubility in the mobile phase. The result was a separation of the two colors contained within the unknown monster's slime trail. The girls were then able to compare the colors from the monster's slime trail on the filter paper with the known slime trails of three monsters, Nellie the Nibbler,

Manfred the Muncher, and Geoffrey the Gobbler, to determine which of the three monsters stole the candy.

Overall, the Outreach Committee thoroughly enjoyed the day's activities and was pleasantly surprised by the enthusiasm for science among so many of the young girls.

For more information about the AWIS Outreach Committee, or to volunteer for an upcoming activity, please visit the Outreach page of the AWIS-SD website (<http://awis.npaci.edu/shtml/out.shtml>) or contact Jodi Connolly at jconnolly@san.rr.com.

Upcoming Outreach Committee Activities:

1. The Outreach Committee is putting together a presentation on how to develop a good science fair project, which will be presented to two classes of middle school students during the last week of January. The actual date of the presentation is flexible, depending on volunteer availability, but will require a commitment of one afternoon from approximately 2-3:30 p.m. Volunteers are needed to develop and deliver the presentation.
2. The Outreach Committee will once again participate in Hope Elementary Science Day, which will take place on the morning of Thursday, February 20th. Volunteers are needed to develop and lead four 40-minute hands-on workshops for 5th and 6th grade students.
3. The next Outreach Committee organizational meeting will be Monday, January 13th from 6-7 p.m. at The Scripps Research Institute. We will be preparing for both of the events listed above. For more information and directions, please visit: <http://awis.npaci.edu/shtml/out.shtml>. To RSVP, please email Jodi Connolly at jconnolly@san.rr.com.

A Day in the Life of the AWIS Book Club

By Hima Joshi

It's a pretty impressive spread. Veggie dip. Carrots. Orange-flavored cranberries. New-age fruit drinks. Briefcases. Backpacks. Book lists. We all chuckle as Ray reads an entertaining passage out loud. We speculate about the assertions made in this passage and end up having a conversation about values, religion, and tolerance. I learn about how Julie grew up and where Cathy went to college. I share some stories of my own. Some of us didn't like the book, and others did. A few of us couldn't finish the book, but it doesn't seem to matter. The conversation is fun anyway.

This is the typical scene at the AWIS Book Club meeting. We meet every other month to talk about the book we have chosen. How do we choose our reading material? The person whose turn it is will propose two books (usually after many suggestions and tangential discussions). These two books are then put up to a vote. We started out reading very academic books about evolution and women in science. We have since moved on to novels and travel books. I have been introduced to books that I never would have chosen on my own. I have also had the opportunity to read books that have been on my list for a long time.

At the end of every meeting, we each give the book a rating. The person who chose the book writes a review based on our ratings and discussion. (Check out the most recent book review in this issue of the newsletter.) If you enjoy reading and conversation, consider joining us. Our next meeting will be on Thursday, January 23, 2003 at 6:00 p.m. at the Scripps Research Institute in the fourth floor conference room of the Beckman Building. We will be discussing The Bean Trees by Barbara Kingsolver. For

more information, go to : <http://awis.npaci.edu/shtml/book.shtml>. If you would like to be on our e-mail list, please drop me a line (hjoshi@sandiego.edu). Happy reading!

AWIS October Event Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk By Tracy Vivlemore

Sunday October 20, 2002 may have dawned with a gloom more reminiscent of June, but despite the clouds, AWIS members helped brighten the future for victims and survivors of breast cancer. Eleven AWIS members and friends joined about 10,000 other San Diegans in the 5th annual Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk in Balboa Park. Part of a nationwide program to raise money to support the American Cancer Society's research, education and support programs, the Making Strides walk was a noncompetitive 5 mile walk that wound through the park and even ventured onto the 163 freeway. All team members took home a special Making Strides T-shirt with the AWIS logo.

To raise money, participants asked family members, friends and co-workers for donations; the team also had a website where fellow AWIS members could make donations. In all, the AWIS team raised well over \$2000. Many thanks to all who participated and especially to all members who made donations to our team.

AWIS San Diego's team for the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk. Pictured left to right are: Tracy Vivlemore, Rachel Taylor, Carrie Cochran, Janice Payne, Karin Lucas, Rose Wright, Rosemary Cesario. Not pictured are Caroline Lanigan, Jessica Stone, Alan Cesario and Paul Payne.



Strategy Sessions: A "for members only" event— an experimental success!

By Anjali Kansagara

A new program of events designed specifically for the San Diego AWIS membership was conceived and implemented this year. These events are specifically referred to as "Wine and Cheese in the Women's Lounge: Strategy Sessions for Professional and Personal Development". The "Strategy Sessions" team consists of Anjali Kansagara (Chair), Swanie Schmidt, Karin Zeh, and Janet White. Depending on the topic, guest advisors are invited to contribute to the evolution of the Strategy Session workshop. This year, Susan Forsburg and Karen Arden served as guest advisors for the October Strategy Session.

Each month, since August of this year, AWIS members have met over wine and cheese to discuss and strategize about personal, professional, and career related choices. Topics covered in the

Strategy Sessions this year were 1) defining success, 2) learning to find solutions to professional struggles, 3) sizing the gaps in professional and career development, 4) developing resources for professional growth, and 5) getting motivated and staying motivated.

Each Strategy Session has drawn an average of 60 members in attendance in an interactive, workshop based, facilitated networking format. In general the Strategy Sessions have been received positively, with repeat attendees from month to month.

If you are a member and have not attended one of these Strategy Session forums, put your membership to work and take advantage of these free (for AWIS members), interactive, energetic facilitated networking sessions. In a safe, informative, and high-energy atmosphere, you will have an opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences. You'll also have an opportunity to network for jobs or form relationships with women with whom you share interests.

The unique aspect of the Strategy Sessions is that one is able to share her experiences with the group and learn from others' experiences. Such advice is hard to find in books; experience is still the best teacher. In next year's Strategy Sessions, we will dissect some specific topics in detail and search for strategies in addressing specifics regarding interviewing, work and family, alternative careers, and negotiating, to name a few. For example, what's the best way to attack a difficult interview question? Learn the difference between a legal and an illegal interview question. What is the right time for motherhood? How do you balance success in the workplace without compromising family? What are the best strategies for negotiating a job contract or a raise or even a new project? How do you address differences in opinion with your boss or peers? How do you know what the best "alternative career" is? These are difficult questions we cope with as women. In a group setting with women from various walks of life, come discuss the best strategies for succeeding in these difficult situations.

The calendar is set for next year's Strategy Sessions. In 2003, the interactive, workshop-like format will be preserved, but the Strategy Sessions will occur every other month on the first Monday of the month beginning in February. Topics will include 1) Interviewing 101, 2) How to find an alternative career, 3) Working woman vs. working mother, 4) How to communicate with confidence in the workplace, 5) How to negotiate a job contract, and 6) Strategies for resolving conflict.

If you would like to be a guest advisor for any one of these Strategy Sessions, please contact Anjali at anjali@zety.com. Your contribution will be valuable in making the Strategy Session a success.

Thanks to the many members who have supported the Strategy Sessions by attending these monthly events. Your attendance and personal exchange of experiences and ideas with the group has allowed the Strategy Sessions to succeed. You can start looking forward to another successful year of Strategy Sessions. Check in with the Chapter website for updates.

Membership/Database Committee Remodel

By Karin Lucas

The membership/database committee has had a great year with many achievements. Kudos to Susan Jennings who, in addition to bringing new life to the world, oversaw the creation of a user-friendly database of all members and many interested non-members. Now sending mass e-mails announcing events and AWIS opportunities is just a click away! Thank you to all committee members for their efforts in putting on a well attended open house. Swanie Schmidt led an excellent workshop on networking, and members of all committees showed up in force to supply

information on all the ways members can get more involved in AWIS. Anjali Kansagara deserves special recognition for her brilliance in creating the very popular Monday evening Strategy Sessions. If you haven't attended yet these are designed as a facilitated networking event with a new topic every time. There are six sessions scheduled for 2003 and I highly recommend attending.

Clearly the committee has overseen a number of very different events and projects and the board has decided to restructure the committee in order to streamline event coordination and clarify the focus. Anjali Kansagara has chosen to step down as chair in order to focus solely on the strategy sessions, which will now become a sub-committee of Events. Database, chaired by Susan Jennings, will become its own committee. Karin Lucas, co-chair of the WIB PR committee, will chair the reorganized AWIS Membership/PR committee. The major goals of the Membership/PR committee will be to increase awareness of AWIS through the media as well as through dissemination of literature at local scientific events, to develop and maintain collaborations with other local scientific organizations, to create an "Outstanding Female Scientist of the Year" award, to develop and maintain relationships with local corporations and, of course, to increase membership and encourage current members to become more involved. To achieve our goal of establishing new corporate sponsors and increasing job postings on our web site Natalie Schiller has agreed to become the AWIS Corporate Liaison. Natalie will be a go-between for corporations looking to become sponsors and post jobs with us.

In early January (date TBA) the Membership/PR committee will have its first meeting of the year. If you are already a committee member this is an important meeting to attend to decide what role you want to play in achieving these goals. If you're not yet a committee member this is a great time to get involved as we make a fresh start for 2003. Watch the website for meeting time and location. I hope to see you all there!

Women In Bioscience Conference

By Barbara Armstrong

The Women in Bioscience Conference is a biennial event organized by the San Diego Chapter of the Association for Women in Science. The focus of the conference is professional and personal development. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the conference. The 1993 conference was organized by Lynne Friedmann (LF), who will serve as the plenary speaker of the 2003 conference. Lynne was kind enough to answer a few questions about the first conference:

Q: What inspired you to organize the conference?

LF-I was a speaker at a similar conference organized by the AWIS Bay Area Chapters and held at Stanford University in early 1993. I found the focus on opportunities (and not obstacles) generated an incredible energy level. I knew immediately I wanted to bring the concept to San Diego. In fact, I got carried away and was quoted in the San Diego Daily Transcript stating a Women in Bioscience conference would be held in San Diego. I made that public commitment before a planning committee was formed, speakers contacted, or any money raised.

Q: What was the biggest challenge, or obstacle to putting the conference on?

LF - At that time, the AWIS San Diego Chapter had very little money in the bank, therefore, a successful fund-raising effort was critical. However, AWIS had no name recognition in the business community and had never done fund raising. Critical to overcoming these obstacles was affiliating the conference with

UCSD CONNECT, which was made possible by CONNECT Program Director Barbara Bry. Having the CONNECT logo on the WIB letterhead upped the chances that our solicitation letters would be read. They were and \$10,000 was raised, which more than covered expenses and made a profit for the chapter.

Q: What did you want to accomplish? What was your main objective?

LF - Create a conference that focused on opportunities and addressed the needs of

- students seeking information on careers in industry,
- women in academia who wished to transition to industry, and
- women in industry who wished to move from the lab bench to management or service-sector career paths.

Q: What do you feel was/were the success(es) of the conference?

LF - The fact that 10 years later, WIB is still going strong. This, in turn, has increased chapter membership and put the chapter on a solid financial footing. Perhaps the most important success of WIB is that committee involvement has proven to be a valuable leadership training path for AWIS members. This was an unexpected outcome, but in many ways is the most important legacy of WIB.

Q: Any other thoughts you would like to share?

LF - The 1993 conference was organized in the dark ages -- before e-mail and the Web. At the time, our only means of chapter communication was a photocopied newsletter that was little more than a typewritten page. Up to that time, the Chapter had never undertaken a project of this size and scope. Fourteen AWIS members answered the call for volunteers and formed the first conference organizing committee. They were: Barbara Armstrong, Judy Berlfein, Rosemary Fellows, Patricia A. Ferber, Lynne Friedmann (chair), Lisa Grillone, Joan Kanter, Yolanda Nieuwkerk Lerner, Sue Lowery, Tonya Novara, Michele Ramirez-Weinhart, Sandra Slivka, and Eleanor Williams.

handle the administrative responsibilities for the trial and act as the liaison between the site and the sponsor company.

Approximately 70% of all CRA's in the United States have a nursing background. A degree in the biological sciences is also recommended for work in this area.

If you are considering a change in your career path and would like to find out more about the field of clinical research and the opportunities within that field, join us January 21st from 6:00-7:00pm for an open house. Learn about current career opportunities, current salaries, how to earn promotions, new positions and be trained for the industry.

Start 2003 with a bang and expand your career opportunities! For more information about the upcoming training course or free open house, please visit www.sandiego.edu/cra or call 619.260.5986

AWIS - San Diego Chapter Welcomes New Members:

By Emily Leong and Susan Jennings

Deanna Schmidt Asakawa	Stanford University
M. Baker	San Diego State University
Brenda Beckett	
Jennifer Beckey	Xystus Corp.
Iman Famili	UCSD
Amy Hannah	
Allison Hsieh	Isis Pharmaceuticals
Stella Kyounghee Kim	Syrxx, Inc.
Emily Leong	Vertex Pharmaceuticals
Kerri McWeeny	GenVault Corp.
Laura Elizabeth Oldford	IDEC Pharmaceuticals
Nina Robinson	
Fahu Samad	
Rania Siam	The Salk Institute
Eve M. Taylor	NeoTherapeutics, Inc.
Elizabeth Thompson	
Nicole Zimmerman	Vertex Pharmaceuticals

November AWIS Event "The Business Side of Biotech"

By Janice Payne

Sponsored by AWIS and the Forum for Women Entrepreneurs (FWE)

The San Diego biotech community is certainly interested in business development. This interest was evident on November 5th as our speakers presented to a very full house at the joint AWIS/FWE event at the Hilton Torrey Pines.

Our moderator, Karen Howard, earned a BS/BA degree in Marketing from the University of Florida. She runs her own marketing consulting company, KMH Consulting, and assists pharmaceutical or biotech companies in the development and implementation of marketing strategies and plans. She has twenty years of industry marketing and sales experience with both start-up and Fortune 100 companies. Karen did an excellent job introducing our speakers and focusing their presentations on the business model of their company.

Our first speaker, Traci Libby, is the business development manager at Invitrogen Corporation. Traci earned her BS degree in Biochemistry and Cell Biology from UCSD and, upon completion of her degree, began working as a scientist and lab manager at Lee



University of San Diego

USD Offers Clinical Research Training Free Informational Open House January 21st!

For the first time, University of San Diego will offer Clinical Research Associate (CRA) and Clinical Research Coordinator (CRC) training beginning February 26, 2003. This comprehensive 12-week overview of the roles and responsibilities of CRA and CRC's will provide key features, differences, challenges, job criteria and demands, as well as industry expectations of both job roles.

With as many as 150 new medicines awaiting US marketing approval, there are many opportunities for well-trained, motivated, hard-working individuals.

Clinical Research Associates typically monitor the progress of investigator sites in a clinical study. They are involved in the entire trial process, from initiation to on-site review to data analysis and interpretation. CRA's typically travel between 30-80% of the time. If traveling does not fit your lifestyle, the Clinical Research Coordinator position might be a better fit for you. Coordinators

BioMolecular, a small start-up company. She then moved to Calbiochem and during that time she completed her coursework for the Masters Program in Molecular and Cell Biology from SDSU. From Calbiochem, Tracy moved to Chemicon, and four years later she joined Invitrogen.

Invitrogen is a tools company that manufactures kits, reagents and instruments to support research efforts in academic and commercial labs. Since their products are primarily for research use, the need for FDA approval is eliminated, and rapid product development is possible. A tools company is also less volatile than a biotech company because the risk is spread out over many products. Traci's role as business development manager allows her to identify novel technologies, build relationships with outside collaborators and perform intellectual property assessments.

Our second speaker was Diane Goostree, Senior Vice President of Corporate Development at SkinMedica, Inc. Diane earned a BS in Chemical Engineering from the University of Kansas and an MBA from the University of Missouri. She has over 20 years experience as a business executive in the pharmaceutical and life science industries. Her most recent position was VP of Business Development at Elan Pharmaceuticals, where she was responsible for the North American Pharmaceutical division, a business unit of 1400 employees and annual sales of over one billion dollars. Diane moved into her position at SkinMedica earlier this year.

SkinMedica is a specialty pharmaceutical company focused on developing, acquiring and marketing new or existing skin care products. A specialty pharmaceutical company is similar to a tools company in that the risk is lower than biotech and there is a faster timeframe for product development. At SkinMedica, Diane's role is to identify, evaluate and acquire either currently marketed or late-stage development dermatology products.

Our final speaker, Jennifer Giottonini, is Vice President of Business Development at Isis Pharmaceuticals. Jennifer earned a BS degree in Bioengineering from UCSD and began her career at FoxS Labs, a startup medical device company. She then served as Business Development Manager for Gensia Automedics, as well as manager of a healthcare consulting business before moving into her current position at Isis.

Isis is a biotech company involved in the research and development of two platforms that focus on drug discovery. Their antisense technology forms the basis of the GeneTrove division, which provides functional genomic services to the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry. Another division of Isis, known as Ibis Therapeutics, is focused on designing small molecule drugs to bind to specific regions of RNA. Isis has established strong partnerships with Eli Lilly, Amgen, Merck and others. These partnerships eliminate the need for a sales and marketing force.

The advice from our three speakers on transitioning into business development from the bench was similar. They recommend starting at a small company to get a variety of experience and placing yourself in a position with outside contacts. Find a mentor or coach at your company who can help in your transition.

Many thanks to our moderator, speakers and to Jennifer Beckey of FWE for another great event!

October AWIS Event

Managing Your Personal Success in the Workplace

Speaker: Katie Carr, MBA
By Janice Payne

This is the year. You deserve a promotion. What approach should you take with your supervisor and management that will be the most successful?

You have just been told that your company is downsizing and your position is being eliminated. How do you handle stress in an ever-changing work environment?

Those were two of the topics discussed at our October AWIS event entitled "Managing Your Personal Success in the Workplace," held at Avanir Pharmaceuticals. Our speaker, Katie Carr, is a member of the AWIS-SD Events Committee and has extensive experience as an executive in the biotech industry. She earned a B.S. in Psychology and a Masters in Business Administration and in 1994 she took on an executive role with a small clinical research site here in San Diego. Over the course of eight years, she helped the company grow from one location to eight locations throughout California. Management during this time of growth meant dealing with the stress of growth. As President and COO of the company, she was involved in the financial management, business development, human resources, and operations management of the entire company. Her focus for 6 of the 8 years was helping her staff deal with the effects of major change in an organization while in a state of growth.

People respond to change and stress in the workplace by going through the following ten stages: equilibrium, denial, anger, bargaining, chaos, depression, resignation, openness, readiness and finally re-emergence. Productivity can be greatly reduced as an employee goes through these stages. The length of each stage can vary based on how management handles the change.

Management can use several methods to deal with employees who are resistant to change. Educating and communicating changes to employees, as well as allowing participation of employees in discussions involving change are the most positive methods. Sometimes management will resort to manipulation and coercion in order to get employees to improve productivity.

On the other hand, if you feel a promotion is in your future, there are several questions you must ask yourself. Are you in an environment where a promotion is possible? Is your boss your advocate? If not, you must try to keep a positive attitude when presenting your ideas to your boss. Meet with your boss to discuss your accomplishments and always document what you've done. Find a mentor or talk to others who are doing the job you want.

Knowing yourself is also very important in achieving success in the workplace. Several books are available to help you discover your strengths. *What Color is Your Parachute* by Richard Nelson Bolles is updated every year and will help you determine what it is that you like to do. A great story about dealing with change in the workplace can be found in the book *Who Moved My Cheese* by Spencer Johnson, M.D. Personality tests, such as the Myers-Briggs test, will give you details about certain traits that may help you in the workplace.

Finally and most important, you must be the director of your success!!

Many thanks to Katie for a great event!

Immigration Processing Delays

By Suzanne Brummett

Suzanne Brummett (suzanne@americavisalaw.com) is an immigration attorney in Carlsbad, CA.

Post September 11th immigration policies and procedures have been causing substantial delays in processing of nonimmigrant petitions in the United States as well as in visa processing at U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad. More delays can be expected for the coming year due to tough new security measures, erratic and unpredictable adjudications by the Immigration and Naturalization Service ("INS") and a general atmosphere of zero tolerance in immigration.

More recent developments may further exacerbate the already backlogged process. For example, the recently passed Homeland

Security Act of 2002, will reorganize the functions of the INS into the new Department of Homeland Security, in order to prevent terrorist attacks and reduce the vulnerability of the United States to terrorism, but this may create additional delays.

Why are there delays in INS Processing?

INS processing delays are not uncommon and cannot be predicted with any certainty. In the past, these delays have been caused by a variety of reasons which include varying internal procedures at each of the four INS Service Centers (California, Texas, Vermont and Missouri) and processing priorities designated by INS headquarters in Washington, D.C. As a result, it is not uncommon to find fluctuations in processing times between the different INS Service Centers. Processing times also fluctuate due to the influx of increased filings around the holidays.

The primary reason for the delays in adjudication of petitions and applications for extensions of temporary status in the United States currently stems from additional security checks required prior to petition approvals. This has created backlogs due to lack of sufficient training and equipment at INS to conduct the required background checks.

Article continued on page 8 (see: Immigration processing delays)

November AWIS Book Review

Marco Polo: The Travels

Translated and with an Introduction by Ronald Latham

Review by Raymond Seraydarian

In the middle of the 13th century, Europe's moneyed classes had access to the trade goods of the East – silk, spices, jewels – but not the faintest idea of the countries from which these things had come or of the peoples who lived there. Travel was slow and difficult, and the Islamic world separated East and West. While a bolt of cloth or other material item could pass from ship to ship or from caravan to caravan, *ideas* didn't travel so easily intact. At the age of 17, Marco Polo set out from Venice with his father and uncle on a trip to the East that lasted over 20 years.

While Polo had traveled farther and had seen more than any Westerner, the fact that he left any written record at all was the result of a happy accident. Both he and a romance writer named Rustichello of Pisa were prisoners of war in Genoa soon after Polo's return to Italy. At Rustichello's urging, Polo reconstructed his tale from memory and from notes he was able to obtain while the writer set them down. While The Travels may have entertained and even fired the imaginations of Polo's contemporaries and successors (including Christopher Columbus, who is known to have possessed a copy), they did not make compelling reading for most of the AWIS discussion group as the reviews below attest. Even the translator Latham admits in his introduction

“We may regret that, with such incomparable material to work on, neither of the men was a literary genius – that Marco failed to impart, or Rustichello to elicit, a living drama of events and personalities, an image of the impact on a mind moulded by medieval Catholicism of a highly developed alien civilization.”

The Mongol Empire of Kubilai Khan was immensely larger, more powerful and more prosperous than any part of the West, including the Roman Empire among whose remnants Polo's contemporaries were living. While much of this does come out in the narrative, the text is larded with catalogs of names of cities merely passed through along various parts of the journey along with lists of produce and trade goods produced in those places. The schizophrenic style is a lumpy mixture of Polo's keen but matter-of-fact observations – the Polos were traders, after all, and on the lookout for markets and profit – and Rustichello's romanticism.

One aspect of the book I personally found interesting was Polo's descriptions of people. Given his medieval Catholic upbringing in the years not long after the Crusades, he employs four major divisions: Christians (Catholics), schismatic Christians (called Nestorians & Jacobites), Saracens (Muslims), and everybody else (whom he labels idolaters). He has no good words to say about the Saracens, but the Tartar ruler Chinghiz Khan is described as, “a man of great ability and wisdom, a gifted orator and a brilliant soldier.” In Toloman, on the way from Peking to Bengal, he meets a people who are “... a very handsome race, not fair-complexioned but brown, and are good fighting men.” Black Africans of the island of Zanzibar are “a big-built race” with “the appearance of giants.” They also have “big mouths and their noses are so flattened and their lips and eyes so big that they are horrible to look at. Anyone who saw them in another country would say that they were devils.” Polo never uses the word Buddhists, but when in those parts of the world he describes the customs and charity of those “idolaters” in a sympathetic way.

I can actually recommend this book to anyone interested in the subject matter. The dull parts can be skimmed easily, and the reader may savor the more interesting portions such as descriptions of peculiar marriage practices of various peoples (in Tibet no man would ever take a virgin for a wife) or exotic animal life (the description of a “unicorn” on the island of ‘Lesser Java’ (Sumatra) is clearly that of a rhinoceros). I found Latham's introductory material good preparation prior to reading the main text and a good (and brief) review afterwards. The individual ratings are given below

Ratings

1 star (could not finish)	1 vote by one person who read 10%
2 stars (could not recommend to others)	
	1 vote by one person who read 25%
3 stars (might recommend to others)	
	1 vote by one person who read 25%
4 stars (would recommend to a friend)	
	1 vote by one person who read 95%
5 stars (would read again)	0 votes

Weighted average = 3.32 stars

AWIS Members On the Move.....

Tobey Tam, has given birth to Baby Jake Tam Lestyk. He was born Nov 8, 2002 around 5 a.m. and weighed in at 7.75 lbs with height at 21 inches.



Reflections on Depression

By Hima Joshi

She told me that I had no signs of anemia. I was not deficient in any particular nutrient, and my thyroid gland was normal. Then, much to my surprise, the doctor pulled out one of those glossy, collegiate pamphlets. You know the pamphlets I'm talking about. They typically have a picture on the cover of a young person carrying a backpack, and they're entitled "So, You're Thinking about Quitting..." or "Be Smart about Sex." I felt myself getting nervous. I was on the cusp, the doctor stated matter-of-factly. I would probably be fine without pills, but I might benefit from them. "If you're going to try them, you should take them for at least six months before you decide whether you think they're helping you," she cautioned.

Wow. I was completely caught off guard. I had gone to the Student Health Center because I was feeling unusually tired and morose. I did not expect the doctor to offer me anti-depressants. I don't really know what I expected, honestly. Perhaps I was being naïve. Maybe I was in denial. I think I just wanted to hear that I needed more iron in my diet.

"I knew that I needed some kind of help and that I was suffering from a severe depression. I sought help after maybe three months of ongoing malaise, crying, etc.," explained MB, a chemical engineer who lives in Michigan. Like me, MB was skeptical about taking anti-depressants. Her doctor suggested the use of drugs in combination with therapy. "She believed that this 'one, two punch' would be the most beneficial approach." In MB's case, the one, two punch took about two years. When she felt like she was back on track, MB decided to stop her treatment. "Actually, I made a semi-conscious decision that I didn't need it anymore. I told my doctor after the fact."

To me, it is strange and incredible that this type of temporary chemical intervention has straightened out the topsy-turvy paths of so many people. How do these drugs work? What are they actually doing inside a person's body? The most commonly prescribed anti-depressants are called selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors (SSRIs). There was an advertisement on television last spring that illustrated, in cartoon form, how SSRIs work. Perhaps you remember this ad. It was simple yet effective. There was a black-and-white drawing of a spherical blob with a smiley face.

This smiley-face blob was hanging out between two other blobs that had tree-like projections.

As many of you know, the smiley-face blob is serotonin, a neurotransmitter. The tree-like blobs are neurons, and the gap between two neurons is a synapse. After a serotonin molecule is released by a neuron, it travels across the synapse and is engulfed by a neighboring neuron. This chemical message is then passed on from this neuron to the next. Studies suggest that the presence of a large number of serotonin molecules in the synapse leads to the feeling of happiness. An SSRI ensures a high concentration of serotonin in synapses by preventing the pre-synaptic neurons from engulfing serotonin molecules.

The people I have talked to feel that they needed SSRIs to lift them out of their emotional low long enough to help themselves. MB says that her medication allowed her to "overcome the initial recovery hurdle of [her] depression." When I asked JV, a medical resident, if she thought that she could have tempered her anxiety without her anti-depressants, she replied "Probably not." "Things that seemed disastrous before were more manageable," JV explained. "I didn't get as upset in stressful situations."

How is it possible to know if someone "needs" SSRIs? Are we over-prescribing anti-depressants in this country or are we finally paying attention to a problem that has long been overlooked? "I see a lot of people on these meds, especially older people now," says JV. "Since they have relatively few side effects they are worth giving a shot...I think they are being appropriately used and not over-prescribed."

On the other hand, MB feels that the side effects from her first medication were "imposing." She had to switch medications, and she feels strongly that patients should be told about all of the potential side effects well ahead of time.

Does MB feel that anti-depressants are over-prescribed? "I'm not sure. I believe that they may be over-prescribed as a clinical-only treatment for a condition that has a clinical as well as a social cause. Therefore, I truly believe that they should be prescribed jointly with therapy."

The more I talk to people, surf the web, and read, the more I appreciate what a complicated problem depression is. Sometimes I don't know what to think. Is the smiley-face television advertisement just a manipulative, lucrative ploy, or is it educational and informative? Where do we draw the line between the pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps candidates and the individuals who need chemical help? One thing is for sure. The decision to seek treatment or to opt out of it is a very personal one. Yet this decision is often influenced by doctors' opinions, advice from friends, familial pressures, and advertisements. Perhaps when it comes right down to it, we are left to trust our gut feelings.

Looking back on my visit to the doctor, I realize that it was a moment of amazing clarity. As soon as the doctor pulled out her pamphlet, I knew what I needed to do. Shortly after this appointment, I marched into my graduate research advisor's office and told him that I was leaving his lab. The joy that I felt that day was something I had not experienced in a long time. Since that time, I have never felt as gloomy as I had felt in the doctor's office at the Student Health Clinic.

I often wonder how things would have been different if I had taken the pills. In my case, a simple life change was enough to lift me out of my misery. I found a new research advisor and a more positive working environment, and I felt like myself again. I realize that for some people, it is not that simple.

In this section of the newsletter we will report on news in the local (San Diego County) biotech community. If you would like to submit news for publication in this section, please send an email to the Chair of the Newsletter Committee, Barbara Armstrong, at baawis@nethere.com. Please put "Biotech Briefs" in the subject heading of your email.

Good News

Idun to Get \$22.8 Million Backing - The financing will allow the company to begin testing a liver disease medication based on cell death technology. (Reported in the LA Times 12-10-02.)

Science Journal The Scientist has announced its "Readers' Choice Awards. Here is a sub-list of the San Diego-based companies who have made this year's list:

GraphPad Software won the "Most Useful Scientific Software Package" award for their GraphPad Prism software.

QIAGEN won in the "Most Useful Kits Provider" category for their QIAGEN Nucleic Acid Purification Kits.

Invitrogen was the winner of the "Most Helpful or Responsive Technical Support."

Neurocrine has formed a \$400 million deal with Pfizer to co-develop and co-market Neurocrine's insomnia drug Indiplon. (Reported in the LA Times 12-20-02.)

UCSD is starting a business school "focused on global technology companies and entrepreneurship." The business school will open its doors in 2004, starting with a few working executives going back for their MBA degrees. Eventually the student body will grow to 300. The school wishes to form a relationship with the local corporate community to "collaborate on research projects, share personnel, and spawn ventures." (Reported in the LA Times 12-18-02.)

Economic difficulties impact the Biotech job sector:

Digital Gene Technologies, a supporter of the Women in Bioscience conferences, has had a particularly large reduction in staff.

Other companies also experiencing a reduction in staff are:

Campbell and Flores, LLP, a firm that specializes in the legal representation of biotechnical and biomedical clients, **Syrrx**, **Nanogen** recently reduced staff by one-third, **Structural Genomics**, and **Structural Bioinformatics**.

The Bioinformatics sector of biotech has been particularly hard hit by the economic downturn. The bioinformatics division of GeneTrove at Isis Pharmaceuticals was recently eliminated.

Swiss-based agribusiness giant Syngenta will close the **Torrey Mesa Research Institute (TMRI)** as part of a restructuring that will bring together Syngenta and **Diversa**. Seventy-six of TMRI's 180 employees will move to Diversa; 30 more will relocate to Syngenta Biotechnology Inc. in North Carolina. (Reported in the 13 December 2002 issue of Science page 2106.)

Filing Chapter 11:

Advanced Tissue Sciences is reorganizing following the filing of Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Their partner, Smith & Nephew will continue manufacturing and sales of ATS products.

Other News:

Pfizer, Inc. agreed to pay \$49 million to settle a suit alleging that a company it acquired two years ago (Warner-Lambert) over-

charged the federal and state governments for Lipitor, a cholesterol-lowering drug. (Reported in the LA Times 10-29-02.)

Immigration Processing Delays (continued from page 6)

What are IBIS checks?

IBIS (Interagency Border Inspection System) is a system started in 1989 that was intended to improve border enforcement and inspections at ports of entry and pre-inspection facilities. It is a database system that consolidates lookout databases from more than 20 federal agencies, including the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), Interpol, Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), INS, Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Coast Guard, Customs and other agencies.

IBIS checks are national security checks utilizing the IBIS database system. These checks are being conducted on all applications at all INS Service Centers to identify suspected terrorists, aggravated felons, wanted persons and individuals with warrants, previous INS contacts, national security risks and other causes for security concern. Although checks are not routinely run on corporate petitioners, an INS examiner has the discretion to request an IBIS check. IBIS checks are being conducted on all foreign national beneficiaries and applicants and all individual petitioners.

These checks can add 30-60 days on processing of petitions. Processing times may take even longer if a "hit" or match occurs. If a "hit" occurs, the file will be investigated, resulting in additional processing delays.

For additional information regarding IBIS see <http://www.customs.ustreas.gov/travel/inte.htm>

Why are there delays in visa issuance overseas?

Most foreign nationals must apply for a visa at a U.S. Consulate abroad before coming to the U.S. Delays in visa issuance have resulted primarily due to additional security checks required under the USA PATRIOT Act of October 2001 and the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act of 2002. Other problems and/or delays stem from failure to submit required supplemental application forms such as Form DS-157, required for all male nonimmigrant visa applicants between the ages of 16 and 45, regardless of nationality and regardless of where they apply for a visa and Form DS-158, required for all J, F and M visa applicants.

Additionally, confusion arising from different requirements at different consulates overseas can also sometimes cause delay when visa applications cannot be processed without submission of the additional forms. For example, some consular posts including Israel and London, require all male *and female* nonimmigrant visa applicants holding Chinese, Cuban, Iranian, Iraqi, Libyan, Russian, Somali, Sudanese or Vietnamese passports to also complete this form.

Requirements for individual consular posts may vary. Some consular posts require all visa applicants to submit either Form DS-157 or DS-158 or both. Therefore, it is important to check visa application requirements before applying for a visa overseas to ensure visa issuance. See <http://usembassy.state.gov/>

Seven Countries Designated State Sponsors of Terrorism

The Enhanced Border Security and Visa Reform Act of 2002 (EBSVRA) mandates additional security measures prior to issuance of visas to aliens from seven named state sponsors of terrorism. These include: North Korea, Cuba, Syria, Sudan, Iran, Iraq, and Libya. For additional information, see <http://travel.state.gov/section306.html>

Additionally, security clearances are mandatory for all applicants bearing passports of, or who are employed by states designated as State Sponsors of Terrorism, who seek to engage in a commercial exchange or academic pursuit involved in one of the critical fields of the Technology Alert List, described below.

What is the Visas Mantis system and the Technology Alert List?

The Visas Mantis is a pre-check name-check procedure designed for all United States government (USG) sponsored programs. It was developed as a result of United States law enforcement and intelligence community concerns that U.S. produced goods and information are vulnerable to theft.

Visas Mantis cables must be submitted for all cases (business, education, training, scientific exchange) that fall under the INS regulations and involve fields on the Technology Alert List (TAL).

The TAL describes which fields are considered sensitive and outlines procedures that U.S. consulates and embassies must follow in issuing entry visas. The Department of State periodically updates its Technology Alert list concerning applicants who are performing duties in research fields or hi-tech areas that are considered "sensitive technologies" and may involve illegal technology transfers.

Currently, the 16 sensitive technologies include conventional munitions, Nuclear Technology, Missile/Missile Technology, Aircraft and Missile Propulsion and Vehicular Systems, Navigation and Guidance Control, Chemical and Biotechnology Engineering, Remote Imaging and Reconnaissance, Advanced Computer/Microelectronic Technology, Materials Technology, Information Security, Lasers and Directed Energy Systems, Sensors, Marine Technology, Robotics, Advanced Ceramics, High Performance Metals and Alloys. For a more detailed description of these fields, please see http://travel.state.gov/reciprocity/Mantis_TAL.htm

As a result, individuals working in one of these areas may experience delays of several weeks in visa issuance. In extreme cases, the State Department may even deny the visa due to issues of national security as the definition of "terrorism" has been broadened for visa denial purposes.

Other Immigration Changes Expected to Cause Further Delays

What is Special Registration?

Beginning on September 11, 2002, at all land, sea and airports, the first phase of a special procedure referred to as the National Security Entry Exit Registration System ("NSEERS") requiring certain nonimmigrants to be fingerprinted and photographed upon arrival to the United States was implemented. Individuals already present in the United States from these countries are required to register at local INS offices based on specific deadline target dates.

Initially, there were five countries (Iraq, Iran, Syria, Sudan, and Libya) subject to special registration requirements. Subsequently,

nationals or citizens of Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Eritrea, Lebanon, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Qatar, Somalia, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were added to the special registration list. Individuals from these countries are required to comply with follow up registration procedures and must notify the INS when they leave the country. Detailed information on special registration can be found on the INS website at

<http://www.ins.usdoj.gov/graphics/lawenfor/specialreg/SRProcL.htm> and <http://www.ins.usdoj.gov/graphics/lawenfor/specialreg/index.htm#what>

What is ISEAS?

The Interim Student and Exchange Authentication System (ISEAS) is operated by the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs, designed to track foreign students. It is a web-based system that requires academic institutions and J sponsors to submit basic biographic data for students who have been issued a Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 (formerly called IAP-66) before the Consulate can issue a F or J visa to either the student or the student's dependents.

This system is designed to monitor the visa issuance process for foreign students and exchange visitors who enter the United States in F-1, M-1, or J-1 nonimmigrant visa categories. ISEAS is a temporary system that will remain in operation until the foreign student monitoring system being developed by the INS is fully operational. The Department of State, the INS, approved institutions of higher education or other approved educational institutions, and exchange visitor program sponsors will use the ISEAS database for the collection and transmission of information relating to foreign student and exchange visitor visa applicants.

What this means is that U.S. consular posts can no longer issue F or J visas without having first received electronic verification from the school via ISEAS. As a result delays may occur when the ISEAS database is not updated as required.

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2002/13406.htm> ; <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/jexchanges/>

What is SEVIS?

The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is the INS internet-based computer system designed to track F, M and J visa holders while they are in the United States. This system will enable schools and program sponsors to transmit electronic information and event notifications to INS and the Department of State throughout the stay of a foreign or exchange student in the United States

Participation in SEVIS by academic institutions will be mandatory as of January 30, 2003. Once SEVIS participation is mandatory, all I-20s and DS 2019s (for J-1 visa holders) will have to be printed from SEVIS to be valid.

For additional information regarding SEVIS, please see <http://www.ins.usdoj.gov/graphics/lawsregs/fr092502.pdf>

CONCLUSION

Tough new security procedures for immigration processing have added delays to INS adjudications and issuance of nonimmigrant visas overseas. Foreign students, postdoctoral scholars and foreign

workers should familiarize themselves with the new changes and requirements involving their nonimmigrant or even immigrant status in order to avoid delays in obtaining the necessary documents needed to travel or remain in the U.S. It is important to keep in mind that false "hits" involving minor criminal convictions, or prior short unavoidable overstays may result in visa issuance delays and could prevent entry into the United States.

Foreign nationals must take into account that nonimmigrant consular processing procedures may vary between consular posts, and delays are to be expected. A final word of caution: immigration enforcement is definitely up and there is a "zero tolerance" policy in place. So be prepared and become knowledgeable to insure compliance with immigration laws.

For additional information regarding INS and State Department processing, please check the following websites:

U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service - <http://www.ins.usdoj.gov/graphics/index.htm>

U.S. Department of State - <http://www.state.gov/>

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT



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About the AWIS Newsletter

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January/February Newsletter staff:

Janice Payne Tobey Tam Hima Joshi
 Barbara Armstrong Suzanne Brummett Cathy Manner
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Send news items, comments, and subscription requests to Barbara Armstrong via e-mail: baawis@nethere.com; or AWIS, PO Box 178096, San Diego, CA 92177-8096. If you would like your article included in the next issue, the deadline for inclusion is February 14, 2003.

Posting jobs in the AWIS newsletter: Contact Natalie Schiller at natalie_schiller@hotmail.com or AWIS voicemail: 619-687-5580, or AWIS PO Box: 178096, San Diego, CA 92177-8096 for details. Deadline for inclusion in the next AWIS newsletter is February 14, 2003. If submitting by snail mail, include the words "ATTN: Natalie Schiller" on the bottom left corner of the envelope.

Moving? Address Change?

Please notify us of your new address so you won't miss our mailings! Please log into our new membership update page <http://awis.npaci.edu/html/login.html> using your AWIS-San Diego username and password. If you have not yet received a username and password, or have misplaced them, please email sdawis@san.rr.com. If necessary, you can also contact us by phone at (619) 687-5580, or mail changes to AWIS - San Diego, PO Box 178096, 92177-8096.

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