



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.

NEWS

Letter from AWIS-SD President Janet White

I'd like to thank all of you who took the time to fill out our annual member survey. Your input is very helpful to the Board and the Committees in helping us plan and set priorities and to make sure we meet members' expectations of AWIS.

Some questions that came up in the survey responses were about the role of the Board. How is the Board selected and elected, and what is our role? Are we aloof and distant? Just what do we contribute to the running of AWIS?

AWIS is fortunate in having bylaws that specify how the Board should be organized and run. I have found the bylaws to be a very useful reference. Any member who is interested is very welcome to e-mail me to request a copy. According to our bylaws, "*A Nominations and Elections Committee or the Executive Board shall be appointed...to be in charge of the election process. This group will include at least one member of AWIS-San Diego that is not serving on the Executive Board at the time of the elections. The Committee or Executive Board will solicit nominations and select a slate of candidates to present to the members of AWIS-San Diego...All officers shall be elected by the members of AWIS-San Diego. The term of office for each Executive Board member shall be for a minimum of two years, beginning at the start of a new calendar year.*"

This is the process we used in 2004 to select and elect our present Board. I am proud of the diversity that we have achieved on our Board. We have a good mix of scientific disciplines, a range of ages, as well as no fewer than five nationalities! One area where we are still under-represented is academia (despite recruitment by the Nominating Committee of several potential candidates), with only one Board member currently in that discipline. I hope that our academic track at the upcoming Women in bioScience Conference in May will encourage more of our academic members to consider standing for election in the future.

Our role as the AWIS-SD Board is to set strategic direction and to provide oversight of our activities without micromanaging our many committees. We do this by developing policies, establishing and tracking budgets, and inviting committee chairs to attend alternate Board meetings to update us or give us guidance on their activities. Each Board member is appointed as a liaison to one or more committees. Their responsibilities include attending committee meetings and providing advice and guidance. Most Board members are also actively involved in planning for the Women in bioScience Conference. Our newest Board members were introduced to members as panelists at the recent Strategy Session on building confidence.

There is always room for further improvement, so please feel free to contact me with any suggestions you have on how the Board can better serve you!

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Upcoming Events

Compiled by Janice Payne

March 12. San Elijo Lagoon Docent Led Walk. Read about the Lagoon in this issue, and join us for a Saturday morning tour from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. To RSVP, contact Kelly Hester (khester22@yahoo.com).

March 16. Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair Balboa Park Activity Center. Call for judges. See page 2 for details. Please contact the Outreach Committee at outreach_awissd@yahoo.com

March 22. Step Away from the Bench Without Leaving the Science Behind. Join us for a panel discussion of scientists who have shifted from the bench to law, business or sales. Location: Trustees Room at the Salk Institute. Speakers: Tobey Tam, Elaine Weidenhammer and Mary Boris. Time 6-8 p.m. To RSVP, contact Cindy Atwell at catwell@adelphia.net.

April 1. UCSD Biological Sciences Dean's Biennial Symposium: RNA: Beyond the Central Dogma, Mandell Weiss Theater on UCSD Campus. 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For registration information, visit: <http://RNAsymposium.ucsd.edu>

April 2. Expanding Your Horizons. UCSD campus. See page 2 for details. Please contact the AWIS Outreach Committee at outreach_awissd@yahoo.com

April 4. Strategy Session. Effective Networking Strategies. Members only. Location: Salk Institute. Time: 6pm

May 21. Women in bioScience Conference. "Envision Your Possibilities" at this one-day conference featuring two keynote speakers and a series of workshops focusing on career and personal development. Salk Institute.

June 6. Strategy Session. Manage Your Time. Don't Procrastinate. Salk Institute.

"Envision Your Possibilities" at the 2005 Women in bioScience Conference!

By Laura Waggoner



The Women in bioScience (WIB) Planning Committee invites you to attend this exciting one-day conference on Saturday, May 21 at The Salk Institute. This year marks the seventh conference in the series, every one of which has been a sold-out event. You may register on-line by visiting the conference homepage at: http://awis.sdsc.edu/WIB_2005/Home.htm and clicking on "Registration."

Early-bird registration is in effect now until **March 31**, after which registration fees will increase by \$10 in all categories. The final deadline to register is **May 7**. So don't delay, and REGISTER NOW!

The Women in bioScience Conference has a threefold mission: to promote networking among scientists at all levels, to introduce women to career opportunities that exist in science, and to showcase positive role models and achievements of women scientists. The conference will feature two keynote speakers: Tammy Dwyer, Professor and Chair of the Department of Chemistry at the University of San Diego and Joanne Silberner, Health Policy Correspondent from the Science Desk at National Public Radio. In addition, the 2005 WIB boasts a series of useful and interactive workshops, which will focus primarily on career and personal development, including "Seven Steps to a Successful Postdoctoral Experience" with Sandra Schmid, "Essence of Effective Leadership" with Simon Vetter, and "The ABC's of CSI – Forensic Science" with Annette Peer, Pattie Lough and Dr. Norman Sperber.

This conference is an excellent opportunity for members of the local science community to network, develop new skills, and explore career opportunities.

If you have any questions regarding the 2005 Women in bioScience conference, please contact co-chairs Janet White (janetwhite99@hotmail.com) and Natalie Schiller (nschill@cox.net). You can also visit the WIB website (http://awis.sdsc.edu/WIB_2005/Home.htm) for more details and updates on speakers and workshops. We hope to see you there!

Upcoming Outreach Events

By Alicia Bicknell

April 2: Expanding Your Horizons

On Saturday April 2, the UCSD campus will be taken over by girls in grades 6 through 10. The girls will be attending numerous fun scientific workshops at the annual Expanding Your Horizons Conference. AWIS will be presenting three workshops: one on muscle movement, one on blood sugar chemistry, and one on cryptography. If you are interested in helping out with any of these workshops or if you have a workshop idea of your own, please contact the AWIS Outreach Committee at outreach_awissd@yahoo.com

March 16: Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair

This year, AWIS will be presenting six awards at the San Diego Science Fair. We will present four junior division awards and two senior division awards. AWIS members will be judging a wide variety of girls' projects to determine who will receive the AWIS awards. This is an opportunity to interact with some really neat young scientific ladies. One of last year's junior division AWIS award recipients, Shannon McClintock, took her award winning project, "The Little Engine that Could: Enhancing Traction through Friction," to the Discovery Channel Young Scientist Challenge and WON this nationwide competition. She was named "America's Top Young Scientist of the Year." If you are interested in judging the science fair competition this year, please contact the Outreach Committee at outreach_awissd@yahoo.com by March 1. The judging will take place on Wednesday, March 16 at the Balboa Park Activity Center and will be a half-day time commitment.

Better Speakers/Communicators Needed!

Submitted by Lynne Friedmann

Join Biotoasters now! The Biotoasters club meets on Mondays at noon and is a Toastmasters club that is open to anyone. However, many of our members are from the biotech community, hence the name.

Lose your fears of public speaking and learn skills that will help you be more successful in whatever path you've chosen in life. Learn how to deliver great presentations, lead teams, conduct meetings, give and receive constructive evaluations and be a better listener. We are all friendly folk pursuing an interest in better communicating with our teams, our community, the press and investors.

About Toastmasters: The mission of a Toastmasters club is to provide a mutually supportive and positive learning environment in which every member has the opportunity to develop communication and leadership skills, which in turn foster self-confidence and personal growth.

We meet Mondays at noon at: Canji, Inc., 3525 John Hopkins Court, San Diego, CA 92121. For more information, please contact Wendy Hancock, President, Biotoasters. Biotoasters website: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/biotoasters/> Toastmasters website: <http://www.toastmasters.org/>

Skill Enhancement Workshops
Sponsored by the Southern California Biotech Center

By Sandra Slivka

The Southern California Biotech Center (SCBC) at Miramar College is pleased to announce the first of its Saturday workshops. These one-day workshops will be conducted by experts in their fields. The SCBC subsidized workshops are very low-cost and include a continental breakfast. Registration fees will be calculated on a sliding scale.

On March 5, 2005, Enoc Hollemweuger Ph.D., an immunologist with Pharmingen, will be presenting a one-day, hands-on, wet-lab entitled an Immunology Review and Introduction to Flow Cytometry. Class size will be limited to 16. The attendees will review immunology and be introduced to the use of a flow cytometer. Attendees will design an experiment using monoclonal antibodies in a flow cytometric analysis of peripheral blood leukocytes.

On March 12, 2005, Rhonda Honeycutt Ph.D., of Clarity Biosciences, will be presenting a workshop on Microarrays. This workshop is intended for any scientist who wishes to become familiar with the methodology of DNA array biology. Instruction will provide an overview of the experimental design (printing, processing, hybridization and scanning) of arrays and the analysis of output images. Applications of microarrays to gene expression, diagnostics, and drug discovery will be discussed. Class size will be limited to 24 in order to provide an interactive experience.

For more information, please contact Sandra Slivka, Director SCBC sslivka@sdcdd.net
For registration visit www.acteva.com/go/scbcmiramar

The Southern California Biotech Center at Miramar is a state-funded center designed to promote economics and workforce development. The SCBC mission includes training incumbent workers. If you are interested in teaching a workshop, please contact Sandra Slivka Ph.D. at 619-388-7490.

Science Writing at UCSD Extension
Class begins March 30, 2005

By Lynne Friedmann

Thinking of an alternative career in the life sciences? Have you always wondered what it would be like to be a reporter or a freelance writer? Explore the world of science writing through UCSD Extension. This course is an introduction to science journalism and other kinds of science writing. The focus is on writing techniques and strategies to help an audience of general readers understand scientific information. Also covered are opportunities for science writing, constraints that shape coverage, ethical issues that govern the reporting of scientific information, and the cultural place of science in society. Visit www.extension.ucsd.edu for more information, or call (858) 534-3400 to enroll.

Instructor: Lynne Friedmann (AWIS Fellow). Trained in biology and journalism, Friedmann has enjoyed a 20-year, award-winning career as a freelance science writer. Among her clients are the

National Academy of Sciences, American Chemical Society, The Salk Institute, Zoological Society of San Diego, and *Genetic Engineering News*. In 2003 she was named a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) for "leadership and significant contributions to the public communication of science and technology."

January Event: AWIS Strategies for Success

By Julie Kinyoun

The panel at the January event presented tips regarding business attire, business etiquette and the art of making conversation. The first half-hour of the event involved a networking session with refreshments. This was followed by a presentation from three panelists.

First, Allison Browne, a local HR rep and consultant for Mary Kay Cosmetics, demonstrated simple ways of improving outfits for various occasions. By demonstrating on a model, she then showed members how to apply makeup and fix their hair for maximum, natural beauty. Next, Dr. Zhu Shen, CEO of BioForesight, Inc., spoke about business etiquette. She emphasized the new trends for scientists in the business world and the additional skills these scientists need to succeed in the science world. One example of a business skill is the proper exchange of business cards. In China, someone's business card is a very personal object to be treated only with the utmost respect. Dr. Shen and Peggy Wallace did a demonstration on the correct way to receive someone's card. It is polite to examine the card upon receipt and make a comment about something noteworthy on the card. Only after a comment about the card has been made is it appropriate to put the card in your pocket. These two women demonstrated the correct and incorrect ways to receive a card. Then, Dr. Shen continued with her presentation. She also emphasized the importance of follow-up after using someone's help or referral. After doing an informational interview once, she wondered where her interviewee had accepted a position. This lack of follow-up made her not want to help this person again. Shen's final remarks were a transition into the next panelist because she explained the importance of positive interaction with other people in the field. She stated that pleasant conversation and genuine interest in people can be very powerful in making connections in the business world.

In conclusion, Peggy Wallace, founder of Making Conversation, LLC, described and demonstrated the importance of conversation in networking. Her presentation included tips for effective conversation: being aware of current events, complimenting and receiving compliments, introducing oneself, making opening remarks, continuing conversation and exiting a conversation. Panelists welcomed questions from the audience, and Allison Browne raffled a gift bag of Mary Kay items. The evening concluded with further networking.

Strategy Session Considers the Past and Plans for the Future

By Valerie Uzzell

Strategy Session Committee

While reading the "homework" for the upcoming Strategy Session, participants realized this might be an unusual evening. The first of four questions we were asked to consider was the following: "Is your day-to-day life meaningful? If not, why not?" Despite, or

perhaps as a result of, this unusual choice for an icebreaker, participants arrived at the February 7 Strategy Session fired up to consider the "Five Year Plan" for our lives. As is often wise, we prepared to consider the future by starting with the past. We considered, and then discussed in small groups, the significant events of the past five years, and looked for patterns in the last five years that might enlighten our plans for the next five. In my case, it was striking how much some things have changed in my life in five years, and how much others have stayed the same. (Sadly, I was in graduate school during the entire period in question.)

After we all learned a surprising amount about the work and personal lives of our fellow AWIS members, we moved on to planning our futures. We used the versatile medium of post-it notes to define a number of goals and experiences for the next five years. Goals ranged widely across participants, from finding a new job to buying a house, and from taking more risks in life to starting a family. After attempting to place these goals on a timeline, each of us chose a single goal to consider in more detail. We brainstormed means to obtain that goal, barriers to reaching it, how achieving it might impact the rest of our life, and what we might have to do now in order to get there.

Although taking five minutes to plan how to get a new job may only be the tip of the iceberg, the exercise helped provide us with the confidence required to plan for the future. Although the decisions we were all trying to make were quite personal, it was surprising and reassuring how similar our dreams and fears were to those of our fellow AWIS members. Most of us, it seemed, were trying to maximize and balance three key aspects of our lives: work, family, and personal growth. At this Strategy Session, I think we all learned a lot about the common experiences of professional women, and we got to hear a lot of great stories!

FEATURES / OPINIONS

Member Profile: Graciella Beyers

By Hima Joshi

"Life is bigger than just your job," says new AWIS-San Diego Board member Graciella ("Gras") Beyers. Her interest in meeting people outside of the workplace brought Beyers to AWIS-San Diego's Women in bioScience (WIB) Conference in 2003. She was so excited about AWIS after the WIB Conference that she became a member and began attending AWIS-SD events.

Beyers feels that AWIS is a great resource for younger people, and she would like to see us reach out to young people even more than

we already do. She is also looking forward to more learning and mentoring opportunities through AWIS. Beyers loves being a mentor, and she has advised many people on career decisions. "We get going on a career, and we don't often take stock," she says. "It's very scary to let go and try something new." She has a particular interest in helping people rise to the challenge of trying new things and devising career paths that are right for them.

"I have always had a clear idea of where I wanted to go," says Beyers. She got a lot of help along the way from the aptitude tests that are an integral part of the school system in Belgium. These tests provided her with continuous career counseling. The one that she took at age 12 suggested that she pursue a university education. When she was 15, Beyers learned from her aptitude test that she had a particular talent for science, and when she was 18, her test

results clearly pointed her toward engineering. "Engineering was not at the forefront of my thoughts as something I could study as a woman," she says. Most of her family members were small-business owners, and she had never even thought about a career in a technical field. In fact, Beyers was the only one of seven children to attend a university, and she is the only one who lives abroad.

Beyers earned her bachelor's degree in biochemical engineering in 1987, and she and her husband moved from Belgium to the U.K. in 1989. Her main reason for moving to the U.K. was to improve her English. At the time, English was the third or fourth language that Belgian students learned, and Beyers felt that becoming more comfortable with English was crucial for her as a scientist. After working for some time at Amgen, Beyers became the first employee to convince the company to fund an M.B.A. degree.

In 2002, Beyers became a permanent resident of the U.S. She had spent the previous year working for Gemini Genetics in the U.K. (which is now Sequenom in the U.S.) and flying back and forth between the U.K. and the U.S. every week. Beyers recently moved from Sequenom to Gen-Probe, where she is the Senior Program Manager in Assay Development. Beyers also teaches a biotechnology management class at UCSD Extension.

When she is not working or attending AWIS events, Beyers goes hiking with her five- and seven-year-old sons. They also help her design cross-stitch patterns and bake desserts. Beyers loves to read. She belongs to a club that sends her compact discs with summaries of business books. She listens to these discs on her commute to and from work. "I suppose I'm a searcher," she says. "Continuous learning is important to me."

Advances in Gender Specific Medicine

By Janice Payne

The secret is out. Women are not merely small versions of men. Thanks to the pioneering efforts of Dr. Marianne Legato, Professor of Clinical Medicine at Columbia University, physicians are being trained to understand how diseases progress differently as a function of gender. Traditionally, medical students have been taught that what we have learned about disease in men can easily be applied to women. This is primarily due to a lack of research on women subjects. Women of childbearing age, or who are experiencing menopause are often eliminated from research studies. Women are now showing great interest in their own health issues and demanding that more research be done on women.

My first glimpse of Dr. Legato was on the evening news in November of 2004. She was describing how male medical students get up and leave the room when she arrives to give a lecture on gender specific medicine. The male students feel there is no truth in her teachings and they don't need to waste their time. I decided I needed to find out for myself what she was all about.

Dr. Legato's academic research on cardiovascular disease involved the structure and function of the cardiac cell. In the late 1990's she reported significant differences between men and women with regard to risk factors, presenting symptoms and therapy for cardiovascular disease. Low levels of high-density lipoproteins in women put them at a greater risk than men with the same levels. Diabetic women have a risk of cardiovascular disease that is two to three times that of diabetic men. Legato felt strongly about these differences, and she went on to form the Partnership for Gender

Specific Medicine in 1997 at Columbia University. She now serves as Director of the Partnership.

One of the goals of the Partnership is to educate both the public and health care professionals through newsletters, journals and lectures. Legato has made multiple appearances on national television, and she currently serves as editor of the peer reviewed Journal of Gender Specific Medicine. Another goal of the Partnership for Gender Specific Medicine is to support gender specific research by awarding grants directly and by encouraging partnership corporations to do the same.

Legato has also authored several books, one of which is entitled "Eve's Rib," which was published in 2002. In this book, she goes through each system of the body and describes gender differences and how those differences affect disease progression. Here are a few examples mentioned in her book.

- Men's brains are larger than women's, but women have more extensive connections between the two halves of the brain. This could explain why women show better signs of recovery following a stroke.
- A woman suffering from a heart attack may have very different symptoms than a man. These symptoms could include back pain, shortness of breath or nausea and may very well lead to a misdiagnosis.
- Women smokers with lung cancer have a mutation in the K-ras gene, which makes this disease more deadly in women than men.
- Early symptoms of HIV infection are quite different in men and women. For an HIV infection to establish itself in a woman, it takes only half the amount of virus that would be required for a man to become infected.
- Researchers are currently setting guidelines for diagnosis of osteoporosis and breast cancer in men, two diseases studied extensively in women.

Thanks to Marianne Legato, differences in disease progression based on gender could lead to new and improved therapies for men and women.

Current State of the Science Beat

By Julie Kinyoun

The science writing community took another slap in the face this fall when financial constraints forced The Dallas Morning News to lay off award-winning science editor Tom Siegfried and a large portion of his staff. Journalists who had not already read or heard about this event elsewhere found out when they attended the November briefing sponsored by the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing at the University of Arkansas. Tom Siegfried attended this meeting as part of the prestigious committee who organized the event. At this briefing, the news spread like wildfire and was alluded to in a presentation although nobody really wanted to call significant attention to this latest blow to the science writing community.

Those familiar with the state of science journalism know that this event was one more bead on the string of discouraging news for the science beat. For those new to the science beat, The Nieman Reports by Harvard University 2004 includes an entire series of essays outlining the various problems encountered by science journalists over the years. The two hundred-eighteen page document includes a forty-seven-page section dedicated to overall science journalism. My goal is to briefly outline some of the more

prominent journalists' claims here in a short article. For the aspiring science writer these essays are a reality check and a reminder of the assumptions and expectations of real-life science editors.

Robert Lee Hotz of the Los Angeles Times kicks off the series of essays by explaining the financial woes of newsrooms. He points out that almost half of the science journalists in the National Association for Science Writers (NASW) are freelancers. The reality of most newsrooms is that they cannot afford to have a science writer on staff full-time. Freelancers or journalists without a science background are forced to cover the science news as the newsroom budget allows. He also points out the lack of analytical stories written by science journalists. Many writers are seduced by the wonder of a story and create adulatory or explanatory work rather than analytical accounts.

Jon Franklin of the University of Maryland shares his recollection of the launch of Sputnik. He uses the ignorance of his high school science teacher to introduce a larger concept. The majority of people, including journalists, are so far removed from science in assumptions, policies and perspectives that it is very difficult for them to communicate it effectively. The practice requires a traversal from one world - that of the journalist - into the strange realm of science and back again. Then, after an author has exerted immense effort to traverse these worlds, the editors may not be interested in that type of story anyway. And so, after a lot of time, effort and energy, the writer may be back to square one.

The challenge of conveying a sense of uncertainty is emphasized by Boyce Rensberger in his essay. Often science writing conveys discoveries as hard facts rather than the latest theory in a string of proven and subsequently disproven ideas. Uncertainties expressed by scientists in their presentations or papers are often ignored in journal style articles. Rensberger includes a text box with bullet-read texts for any aspiring science writer. He concludes with the thought that despite polls that suggest the public reads "fluff" in newspapers, there is a segment of the population that craves accurate, analytical and insightful science coverage.

Deborah Blum, Pulitzer Prize winner, former reporter for the Sacramento Bee and current Professor of Journalism at University of Wisconsin, defends the credibility of the science journalist in her essay called "Investigating Science." She insists that science writers are not merely stenographers as the journalist John Crewdson once claimed. This stereotype seems to be a belief of not just Crewdson but of a number of other people in society as well. Another common criticism of science writers is that they are too accepting of what researchers tell them. She quotes Laurie Garrett of Long Island's Newsday as saying the profession does not demand enough proof that new findings have true validity and old findings still hold true. Blum states that time is the most important aspect in cultivating relationships with professionals in other fields. After six months of developing a relationship with nuclear physicists at a lab, she found that one of them felt comfortable enough with her to confess that he thought administrators were lying about new nuclear weapons. This confession kicked off an entirely new branch of investigation. Because of this information, revealed through a cultivated source, her story was able to reach into more analytical territory.

And, finally, Cornelia Dean, former science editor of the New York Times merits mention as one of the essayists in The Nieman Reports. As the former editor of this prestigious science section,

she is well aware of the difficulties involved in science journalism and the struggles of her staff. Her well-qualified staff members include Ph.D. level scientists and physicians. So why is it so difficult? The area of subject matter is huge. The science section covers all areas of science, medicine and technology. It also covers subjects that, upon first examination, do not seem like science. To complicate this wide sea of knowledge is the increasing specialization of each area. Despite the advanced science training of her journalists, the specialized areas of science extend beyond their knowledge. The self-interest of the scientist becomes an issue as well. With more scientists becoming science advisors or otherwise involved in companies that sell their inventions, there is a growing conflict of interest in the information they share with the press - that is if they will share anything with the press at all. The average scientist will not take the time to talk to the press. Either they fear their story will be reported incorrectly and would rather not even attempt to explain it or they see no benefit to themselves professionally in sharing with the press. Many scientists refuse to speak to reporters. And even if the reporter receives enough information from the scientist to write a story, this reporter then must convince an editor to publish it. While it may not be a problem to publish science stories at the New York Times, many papers do not have editors that are interested in science at all.

Cornelia Dean's rather all-encompassing explanation of the problems in science writing seems to be a good stopping point in my summary of the Nieman Reports. The publication includes essays on environmental, health and medical reporting. Many prominent journalists reveal the issues in the field from their own experiences of working for various publications. For the aspiring journalist, this report reveals a bit more background about why the latest Dallas Morning News cutbacks are not such a surprise. Will these lay-offs be a short-term setback for science journalists or a continuing trend in the obstacles encountered in the field?

Disco Rayado

A Broken Record

By Siobhan Malany

We waited in line at the Miramar city dump, my husband, my brother and I crouched in the cabin of a 10-foot Budget rental truck. At the gate, we were inspected. All of us braced the contents as the truck's flap rippled open. "No electronics," said the gate-keeper as she spied the massive copy machine. Back at the recycling center, we pulled into the mixed paper site, which was the size of the plot our house stands on, and the three of us flung old books and tubs full of magazines onto the mound. We left the records in the truck. Vinyl is not recyclable. Then I stood in line with folks cradling monitors, hard drives, etc. Each paid based on weight to dump outdated technology. "Don't take copiers, Ma'am," shouted the man as he hurled aluminum cans into the counter. I started to ask where to take it but he cut me off. "Don't know; don't take 'em." I stared down at the dreaded machine and imagined myself picketing outside Fry's Electronics. "*Sure you need that second stereo system because you will be paying to get rid of it or storing it in your garage forever.*" I lugged the copier to the car and jumped back into the truck.

Having already been weighed and having paid our \$100 deposit, we drove past the city dump tollbooths. Our rental truck grunted along in a convoy of trucks heading down into the grand canyon of waste. Parking attendants told us where to go as though we had arrived at Disneyland. We whipped up the flap and let the contents crash to

the ground. Grabbing, and throwing, we worked fast to empty the truck. In the background, a steamroller crept past.

We had spent a weekend sifting through a musty garage crammed full. My mother-in-law had been paying \$75 dollars a month from her Social Security check to store my sister-in-law's things for the two years since she had moved away. Last fall, my mother-in-law passed away. What remained in her small flat had been consolidated into this alleyway garage. The rental fee had since accumulated. We went with my sister-in-law to clear the unit and clear our minds. My sister-in-law packed a suitcase full of memories, jumped on a bus and headed back to her three children in Arizona. The next day, we set up camp in the alley. Passersby picked through this and that. I filled our Jetta eight times with clothes and toys to drop them off at the nearby thrift store while my husband and brother separated what could be donated and what was fated for the truck. It was a race against time. Baskets full of cassettes made a horrible crash as they tumbled into the dumpster. There were pillars of records. Many had lost their sleeves. We recovered the bin that made it all worth it, the bin full of photo albums, letters and yearbooks. These items chronicled my mother-in-law, a strong, Mexican woman from Jalisco, Guadalajara, who raised her two children in South San Diego. She saw them earn college degrees and start families.

My brother and I pushed the records to the edge of the truck and my husband hurled them over his shoulder. I looked down at the mirage of covers displaying 60's singers. All around, people's arms were swinging as they hurled. We sped off, our empty truck bouncing along the ruts in the road. At the entrance, we drove again onto the scales. *We had dumped 1.8 tons!* "That'll be \$49," said the attendant. We drove out in silence past the line of trucks waiting at the gate.

Discover the San Elijo Lagoon

By Lynne Friedmann, AWIS Fellow

When driving north on I-5, have you ever wondered about that large coastal body of water between the Lomas Santa Fe and Manchester exits? It's the San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve. Nestled between the cities of Solana Beach and Encinitas, and extending inland to the community of Rancho Santa Fe, the reserve encompasses 900 acres and is home to a remarkable 700 species of birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, and plants.

The reserve encompasses six different plant communities and a variety of underwater habitats making it important not only for year-round residents, but also as a welcome stopover for millions of migrating shorebirds and waterfowl. San Elijo Lagoon's importance to migration is demonstrated by the fact that 40 percent of all North American bird species have been sighted within the reserve. It's no wonder that "birders" from around the world journey to San Elijo Lagoon.

Visitors can experience the Lagoon's sights, sounds, and tranquility along seven miles of trails that wander through the landscape and offer vantage points for bird watchers, inspiration for photographers and artists, a sense of connection for nature lovers, and outdoor classrooms for curious young minds.

Although birds are the Lagoon's most charismatic species, many mammals, fish, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates can be found there. The San Elijo Lagoon is one of the few remaining coastal wetlands of San Diego County. Beyond its intrinsic beauty and environmental riches, the San Elijo Lagoon plays a vital role as

an efficient natural mechanism for dispersing seasonal floodwaters thereby reducing erosion and ultimately stabilizing the coastal shoreline.

Coastal wetlands are one of the most endangered habitats in the world. In the past 100 years, California has lost 90 percent of its coastal salt marshes. Those that remain, such as San Elijo, need protection if they are to thrive in the urbanization surrounding them.

The Lagoon is collectively owned and protected by the State of California, County of San Diego, and the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy (SELCO). Substantial efforts are being made to actively manage the Lagoon's ecosystem for the benefit of the plants, birds, and animals, as well as public enjoyment. No two visits to the San Elijo Lagoon are the same. Experience it soon.

Through a dedicated volunteer docent corps, SELCO offers free public tours of the Lagoon on the second Saturday of each month, starting at 9 a.m. at the Rios Avenue trailhead in Solana Beach. For more information on the San Elijo Lagoon, trail maps, second Saturday public tours, and conservation opportunities, visit www.sanelijo.org or contact SELCO Board member and volunteer docent Lynne Friedmann (lfriedmann@nasw.org).

DEPARTMENTS

Hotel Rwanda

Film Review by Alice Budai

This dramatic and intensely hopeful depiction of the 1994 genocide that took place in Africa shows some of the happenings through the struggles of one man, Paul Rusesabagina, who as a hotel manager was able to save the lives of hundreds of people. Throughout the killings and war that tore his hometown apart, he had one goal in mind: to keep his family safe. In order to keep things under control, he found himself doing his usual job at the four-star Hotel Rwanda. Through his social interactions and knowledge of persuasion, the hotel became an oasis in the midst of the war between two tribes, the Tutsi and Hutu.

The presence of social differences between the Hutu and Tutsi is introduced, but a clear understanding of why the two tribes cannot coexist is not provided. The uprising therefore seems incomprehensible, and the Hutu militia and other media-inflamed activists are seen as a scary uncontrollable mob. The viewer can only sympathize with the victims who do not even know how to cry out for help.

Paul Rusesabagina is happy to learn that a reporter from America was able to film footage of some of the mass murder. When expressing his hope that it would cause other countries to intervene and help, he is told, "if people see this footage, they will say 'Oh my God, that's terrible,' and they'll go on eating their dinners." It is uncertain at first whether Rusesabagina is willing to accept this hard fact of life, but later he uses this knowledge, together with his hope and persuasiveness, to ask the people in the hotel to call anybody they knew who could help and tell them that they needed to do something or else they would already be dead. Because there was nothing else he could do, Rusesabagina held on to any kind of hope and just kept managing the people around him.

The fear of death is shown most dramatically through the love family and friends have for one another when they are about to be torn apart. For example, we are brought in close proximity to what a husband would tell his wife to do in order to make death as painless as possible for her and their kids when there is no more waiting and choice. While the movie documents the loss of many lives, the horror is balanced with the intense happiness of some of the survivors who find one another at a refugee camp. Perhaps these grateful moments and glimpses of hope are what enable the viewer to glimpse the genocide without feeling numbed and overwhelmed. The intense emotions evoked may enable us to take a step closer to understanding humanity as well as see one hopeful perspective of the recent genocide.

Your Two Cents

Compiled by Hima Joshi

Question from last time:

What is your favorite holiday tradition?

Responses:

My favorite holiday tradition is to fold new crisp one-dollar bills and stuff them into red money envelopes to give to family and friends. This gesture is my way of wishing them happy holidays.

Every year, I would visit family and friends to wish them a wonderful holiday and pass out the red money envelopes as a token of good fortune and great health. This is my way of welcoming the holidays and visiting family and friends.

– Nga Nguyen

Nothing compares to "the reading." Every Christmas Eve, my parents dig out their Santa Claus hats and gather the entire family in front of the Christmas tree. My father begins "his reading" from a worn 1960 edition of "Twas the Night Before Christmas." Yes, we began this tradition in 1960, and I think I've missed one or two readings, but my parents have always been there. "The reading" starts off slow, but by the time my father gets to "Now dasher, now dancer..." he's very animated with his arms waving and his voice booming. The rest of us are on the floor laughing. Thanks to my parents for such a fun tradition!

– Janice Payne

My favorite holiday tradition is ushering in the New Year. When I lived in the San Francisco Bay area, 10-15 years ago, I celebrated the New Year by swimming to Alcatraz on New Year's morning with my Swim Club, the South End Rowing Club. I got up at 4 a.m., drove the 50 miles through the fog to the Clubhouse for the last-minute briefing on the course, etc. Then we all piled into the back of a pick-up truck in nothing but swimsuits, (grease optional, but no wet suits-ugh!) for the ride to Fisherman's Wharf a few piers down. Then we rode shivering in the cabin cruiser across to the "Big Rock" (Alcatraz). The first horn was jump-off time into the 47 to 49 degree water. The worst part was the one-minute line-up time before the second horn, when we could start swimming and warm up. We would arrive at the Clubhouse about 45 to 60 minutes later. After scrubbing off the grease and Bay scum and warming up in the sauna, we had a big Holiday dinner in the Clubhouse overlooking the Bay.

Then I moved back east to my hometown of Fairfield, CT, and the Penguin Plunge for Special Olympics didn't take place until late February or early March (water temperature 34 degrees), so I had

to find more sedate New Year's celebrations. My Running Club associates would charter a bus to Central Park, NYC, where we ran the, originally 5 miles, later shortened to 5K (3.1 miles), Midnight (costumed) Run through Central Park to the flashes and booms of nearby fireworks. (Yes, when that little ball goes down in Times Square, there are approximately 6,000 runners in Central Park starting a 5 K run at the stroke of midnight to the start of fireworks, with hardly a reporter there!) My favorite year was the year 2000, when I ran the race in a swimsuit and sunglasses, carrying a towel and a bottle of sunscreen! (That was the year when according to my childhood calculations, I was supposed to be 57 years old and an old lady!) The bus would let us off back in Fairfield at 3 a.m. Then, at 10 a.m. on New Year's morning back in CT (sometimes in 0 degree temperatures -- it gets colder in CT than in NYC), I would run the 3.1 mile Chilly Chili Run. After the race we would have an all-you-can-eat chili brunch at the Community Center. This year I was in San Diego and couldn't find anything really exciting to do, so I just stayed home. Boy, I can't wait to get back to some real celebrating! – Ann Onton

Question for next time:

What is the scariest thing you have ever done?

We would like to publish your responses to this question in the next Newsletter! Please reply to Hima Joshi (hjoshi@sandiego.edu).

Note: Unless you indicate that you would like to remain anonymous, your name will be included with your response.

AWIS Member News

Cindy Atwell, co-chair of the AWIS Events Committee has accepted a new position as Research Associate II at Favrilite, Inc. She'll be working with their Genetic Profiling Group. Congratulations to Cindy Atwell on her new position!

In this section of the Newsletter, we report on the accomplishments (new jobs, promotions, awards, publications, etc.) of AWIS-SD members. If you have any news to report, send it to Hima Joshi at hjoshi@sandiego.edu and write "AWIS Member News" in the subject heading.

About the AWIS Newsletter

The AWIS 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. The Newsletter is free to AWIS members. The subscription rate for non-members is \$20 a year.

March/April Newsletter staff:

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Siobhan Malany Joanne Mullen Janice Payne

Send news items and comments to Hima Joshi (hjoshi@sandiego.edu) or Janice Payne (janice_payne@hotmail.com). If you would like your article to be included in the next issue, please submit it by April 1, 2005.

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