



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.

FROM THE BOARD

AWIS-SD and UCSD Extension Form Partnership

By Jenny Chaplin
AWIS-SD Secretary



AWIS-SD has formed an exciting partnership with UCSD Extension due in large part to the hard work of Kathryn Nguyen, our PR committee co-chair. The relationship came about after Nguyen, pursuing a marketing career, took a UCSD Extension class last year.

She met Parker Pike, course lecturer and marketing manager of UCSD Extension. UCSD Extension had recently begun pursuing strategic partnerships with professional organizations and it didn't take long for Nguyen and Pike to realize that this was a perfect opportunity for both AWIS-SD and UCSD Extension to form a partnership. The PR committee has been pursuing their goal of ensuring that the San Diego scientific community knows about AWIS and what our local chapter can offer. What better way to do this than to extend our reach through UCSD Extension's network?

The partnership focuses on each organization helping to promote the other.

UCSD Extension will provide AWIS-SD:

- Quarterly e-mail blasts publicizing chapter events to their mailing list
- Table exhibit at Open House (March 22 event gave our organization exposure to about 400 attendees)
- Access to facilities for meetings and events
- Access to network of speakers with expertise in diverse topics.

In return, AWIS-SD will provide UCSD Extension:

- Quarterly e-mails about educational events
- Advertisement about upcoming classes in AWIS-SD newsletter
- Table exhibit at major events like the Women in Bio Science conference and the Scholarship Gala.
- Access to AWIS-SD membership for potential speakers

AWIS-SD members should make use of the opportunities made possible through this partnership. Contact Jenny Chaplin, AWIS-SD secretary, at secretary@awissd.org for classroom reservations, speakers or information on events publicized through UCSD Extension.

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Upcoming Events

Compiled by Janice Payne

May 12: Science Writing Workshop. Beckman Center—San Diego Wild Animal Park. See article for details.

May 15: Free lecture. San Diego Natural History museum. Global Warming: Where do we go from here? 6:30-8:00pm

May 19: Women in bioScience conference. Salk Institute. Advance registration required.



"Discover New Heights" at the 2007 Women In bioScience conference organized by the San Diego chapter of the Association for Women in Science. This one-day symposium includes two keynote speakers and a series of workshops focusing on career and personal development. It is an excellent opportunity for members of the scientific community to network, develop new skills and explore career opportunities. For information on conference schedule and registration visit http://awis.sdsc.edu/wib_2007/home.htm. Reserve your spot today. If you have any questions regarding the conference please contact the organizing committee at wib2007@awissd.org.

June 4: Strategy Session. Proactive Career Management. Don't wait until looking for a job to think about career management. Members only event. The Salk Institute. 6-8pm.


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meeting's focus is "Emerging Diseases: Wildlife, People, and Pets." This session will address the possibility of disease transmission between wild animals and people and pets. The event will conclude with a discussion, "Avian Influenza: The Ultimate Threat."

Registration is \$50. For more information, visit <http://www.nasw.org/users/lfriedmann> or contact Heather Henter at hhenter@ucsd.edu.

FEATURES/OPINIONS

Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center Symposium on Women's Cancers

By Karen Josephson

The brisk March Santa Ana winds blew around the Barclay Theater at the University of California, Irvine, where the doors opened to a crowd of nearly 100 attendants including medical professionals, clinicians and the lay public. Several prominent physicians spoke about the state of cancer diagnosis and current treatment for cancers predominately affecting women.

Dr. Krishnansu Tewari led a panel of speakers and initiated a discussion on ovarian cancer screening. Presently, no test exists for early diagnosis. Yet, for a small group of women with genetically derived cancers, preventative treatment regimens can begin with discussions about the benefits of oral contraception and prophylactic surgery. One attendee asked about the use of fertility drugs and the risk of cancer. Dr. Tewari replied that a meta-analysis of 12 studies showed only a weak correlation, but that infertility alone is a risk factor.

Dr. Michael Grade spoke about new diagnostic tools for ovarian cancer. The GE 3-D ultrasound technology is an improvement from 2-D imaging. The older technology achieves only 25% accuracy, but with the newer equipment and software, physicians can achieve 100% accuracy. With GE 3-D technology, Dr. Grade shifts the composite images, as if holding and turning a prism. He is able to image areas to look for abnormal narrowing, saculation and increased dilation. For example, an "orange shift" in the color images signals increased vascularity and potentially cancer.

Dr. Bradley Monk addressed the issue of whether it is appropriate to vaccinate adolescent girls to arrest the spread of cervical cancer. Every year worldwide, 274,000 women die of this disease. Since the vaccine is 100% effective for preventing HPV types 16 and 18, Dr. Monk posits it is unconscionable to allow these women to be exposed to these highly infectious cancer-causing diseases. In addition, current spending for testing and treatment could be eliminated, saving millions of dollars. He also addressed the concern that vaccinating would promote promiscuity, stating that sex education yields healthy life habits. The results from four studies showed that teenagers who received sex education had fewer sexual relations and were more concerned about receiving sexually transmitted infections.

Dr. Frank Meyskens, Jr. discussed concerns regarding the debilitating effects of smoking. Over the last ten years researchers have tried to parse out which smoking behaviors are most risky. Meyskens reported that one of the greatest risk factors is smoking

NEWS

SANDSWA Hosts Local Science Writing Workshop Saturday, May 12 By Amber Dance

"At a gathering of science writers, you are bound to see a few animals," note the coordinators of the San Diego Science Writers Association (SANDSWA) Science Writing Workshop. It is appropriate, then, that the meeting will take place at the Wild Animal Park, on Saturday, May 12.

SANDSWA presents a one-day workshop for science writers of all levels, from professional public information representatives and freelancers, to scientists, students, and those just looking to find out about the field. For beginners, a workshop titled "Opportunities for Aspiring Writers" will provide an introduction to the field.

Author Jon Cohen will give a talk about his book, "Shots in the Dark: The Wayward Search for an AIDS Vaccine." Other session topics will include career conversations, the intersection of science and politics, the art of interviewing, and institutional advancement.

In addition, attending journalists are invited to cover the "State of Endangered Species" conference held at the Park on May 11. The

at a young age. The length of time from smoking cessation to development of cancer appeared to be less critical in comparison. The number of cigarettes smoked and the length of time smoking played a big role in the development of cervical cancer.

The Chao Cancer Center presents ongoing symposiums about cancer. Schedules and information on panelists can be found online at <http://www.ucihealth.com>.

Climate Change and San Diego's Nature: Science and Speculation

By Anne Fege

Global climate change is finally "real." Scientists have believed the atmospheric, oceanographic, and ecological data for at least a decade. Now business and political leaders are finally believing the science, and asking questions. What climate changes will affect San Diego? What scientific studies can inform us about changes in our local environment? These two questions will be addressed in this article, and a second article will ask, "What can we do, as women in science?"

What Climate Changes Will Affect San Diego?

Two reports give good overviews of likely local climate changes, and many others address global effects. The California Energy Commission predicted in 2005 that climate trends in California include greater annual average temperatures and earlier snowmelt and annual river runoff. The 2006 report from the California Climate Change Center forecasted much higher temperatures and a cascading effect on health, water resources, agriculture, forests, and sea levels.

Warmer temperatures. Weather records show that annual average temperatures in California are already warmer than a few decades ago. Extreme high and low temperatures, as San Diego experienced in July 2006 and January 2007, are likely to be more common.

More drought years. San Diego has a Mediterranean climate with winter rains, summer droughts, and a pattern of large differences from year-to-year. Most scientists predict that there will be more frequent and longer droughts in southern California and other areas with limited rainfall, while others predict more rainfall due to increased frequency of El Niño weather events.

Warmer winters and less snow. Since San Diego depends on imported water from the Sierra Mountains and Colorado River, we will also be affected by climate changes in the mountains that are likely to cause earlier spring runoff, rain instead of snow, and drier summers.

More storms and extreme weather. Various global climate models predict that hurricanes, storms, and other extreme weather events (such as Santa Ana winds in southern California) are likely to increase, but their complexity makes it hard to say exactly how.

Higher ocean levels. Global warming will tend to melt polar ice masses, which will slowly raise ocean levels everywhere, including San Diego.

What does science tell us about likely changes in San Diego's natural environments?

Some plants may disappear from San Diego's ecosystems.

Changes in precipitation, mean and extreme temperatures, and extreme weather events are likely to affect the distribution and perhaps lead to an extinction of some San Diego species. Many of these species are endemic or at the extremes of their range. These plants will not be able to shift northward or to higher elevations because the potential habitat has been claimed by development, invaded by non-native species, or has other physical limitations such as unsuitable soil.

Animals may not find food, shelter, or breeding places.

Phenology is the timing of seasonal activities of animals and plants, and records kept for decades (sometimes centuries) highlight recent changes. San Diego birders report that some migrating birds are arriving earlier in the spring, compared with a few decades ago. With gradual shifts in climate conditions, larger animals may seek other locations with sufficient water, food, and shelter, but their movement is limited by development in most of southern California.

Extended drought can stress individual trees. This would increase their susceptibility to insect attack, and result in widespread forest decline. Entire plant species may die off when extended drought occurs in an area, like San Diego, that already has predictable seasonal droughts. Stressed trees have less resistance to insects, such as bark beetles, that girdle and kill the trees. Drought and abnormally warm years that began in the 1980s have resulted in unprecedented pest outbreaks and tree dieback across western North America.

Extended droughts increase the severity of wildfires. Scripps Institution of Oceanography researcher Tony Westerling analyzed the frequency and length of large wildfires, and found that both increased in the mid-1980s. During these years, there were much higher spring temperatures, less summer precipitation, drier vegetation, and longer fire seasons. Close to home, five years of droughts preceding the 2003 fires had drastically reduced the moisture in local vegetation, contributing to the rapid burning. With one ignition and extreme Santa Ana winds, 380,000 acres of shrublands and forests were burned in San Diego in 2003—almost one-sixth of the county.

Exposure of plants to ozone and nitrous oxides increases their susceptibility to drought. As more pollutants drift from southern California urban sources, plants are chronically exposed to more ozone and NO_x (nitrogen oxides), and more dieback is likely. Plants adapted to our Mediterranean climate in San Diego conserve water by closing their stomates (openings similar to pores) during the day. Pollutant exposure keeps the stomates open longer, allowing water molecules to escape, and plants dry out much more quickly.

Local water supplies will be tapped out, and imported water supplies will be limited. In the backcountry, excessive groundwater pumping is already drying out local streams, habitats, and wells. In drought years when creeks are dried out even longer, fish, frogs, and other aquatic animals will have fewer places to eat and live. Less water will be available for import from the Sierra Mountains and Colorado River because of the earlier spring runoff, rain instead of snow, and drier summers. Drier weather will

increase demands for domestic landscape watering; yet if irrigation for fuelbreaks, golf courses, and other public landscaping is reduced in San Diego, they will become bare, dusty, weedy acres that are highly flammable and prone to erosion.

Rising oceans will erode beaches and bluffs, and local estuaries will be under water. Higher ocean levels will cover more of San Diego's beaches with water, and there will be an increase in beach sand loss. This will permit storm waves to more aggressively attack coastal bluffs, increasing erosion and endangering bluff-top structures. Higher ocean levels will drown out the areas of estuaries closest to the current shoreline.

What can we do to face climate change in San Diego? Read more, in the next issue of the AWIS newsletter!

Anne S. Fege, Ph.D., M.B.A. is a Botany Research Associate, San Diego Natural History Museum, retired Forest Supervisor, Cleveland National Forest, and a member of AWIS since 1978. References are available from the author; email afege@sdnhm.org

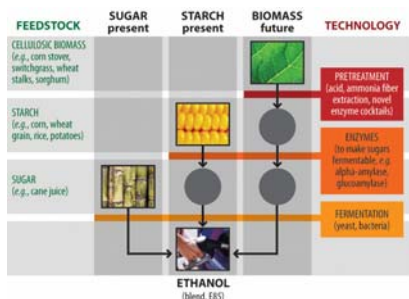
COMMITTEE EVENTS

Diversa Takes the Lead in Biofuels Research

By Janice Payne

"Ethanol derived from cellulosic biomass will drive the path forward to eliminate America's addiction to fuel." This statement by Gordana Djordjevic, senior scientist at Diversa, shows her commitment to Diversa's mission of using their expertise in enzyme research to become the leading manufacturer of biofuels, mainly ethanol. Djordjevic was the speaker at the March AWIS event, which included a tour of the facility.

Diversa already markets enzymes that convert the starch from corn into sugars that can be used to manufacture ethanol. Converting corn to ethanol is a fairly simple process, but requires a lot of energy and puts a strain on the nation's corn supply. Diversa's Fuelzyme™-LF enzyme product has improved the efficiency and reduced the cost of converting the starch from corn to ethanol.



However, manufacturing ethanol from cellulosic biomass rather than corn, would make use of products normally thought of as waste. Cellulosic biomass includes switch grass, corn stalks, wheat straw, and other crop residues, which are more plentiful than corn. It is more difficult to extract sugars from these crop byproducts. Diversa is developing a cocktail of enzymes, Fuelzyme™-CX, which would make this process more cost-effective and efficient.

Diversa's enzyme discovery research involves searching for microbes in the environment, extracting the microbial DNA and making libraries of microbial genes. The company then uses their GigaMatrix high throughput screening technology to screen these genes with the hope of discovering unique enzymes. During the tour, Diversa employees were proud to show off the GigaMatrix screening platform. The platform uses 400,000-well plates, allowing them to screen a billion samples per day. Attendees also had the opportunity to view the pilot plant, a smaller version of the off-site plant in Mexico. The on-site fermentors have a capacity to scale-up 500 liter reactions. One attendee noted that several Diversa employees stayed late and it was evident that "the employees were so into what they were doing."

Many thanks to the Events Committee and the Diversa employees

Expanding your Horizons Conference: Early Start to Shaping Girls' Beliefs

By Paula Campos Soto

Research suggests that by age 12, children have formed strong beliefs about the subjects at which they excel and those in which they fail. If we want girls to believe that they can excel in science and engineering and that these careers are viable choices for them, we need to start early.

That is what Expanding Your Horizons (EYH) Conferences are all about. This annual conference, specially designed for 6th – 10th grade girls, offers hands-on explorations in science, engineering, math and technology, while providing young women with opportunities to meet and interact with positive role models active in these career fields.

This year, the conference was held at the University of San Diego campus on March 17. It included workshops in more than ten different areas such as space science, health and medicine, and forensic science.

Julia Claggett, a graduate student at the University of California, San Diego, and a volunteer at EYH, led a workshop titled "The Leaning Tower of Spaghetti" in which the girls built towers of uncooked spaghetti and marshmallows and then tested their sturdiness on an earthquake simulator.



For Claggett, the best part of the conference was, "watching the girls' expressions change as they watched their building miraculously stand up to the test, or crumble to a gooey, sticky mess."

Another EYH volunteer, Anne Valle, also enjoyed interacting with the girls and noted, "even the ones who try to pretend they are too cool to care really open up when they are given a chance for hands-on experience and given a little praise and encouragement."

Besides stimulating and empowering workshops, the conference also provides girls the opportunity to meet and interact with female mentors. These role models included some of San Diego's leading biologists, computer scientists, engineers and physicists who will hopefully help form the beliefs of these girls.

The two keynote speakers were Sandra Daley, M.D., a pediatrician, UCSD professor and community leader and Diana Gomez, a senior electrical engineer with the California Department of Transportation and National President for the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers. These women, along with the volunteers who helped organize and lead the different workshops, have shaped the beliefs of more than 600 girls in one single day.

“An experience like EYH allows girls to find more contemporary role models, women in every field of science. I would encourage young girls to attend EYH because it’s fun, it will open their mind to all the possibilities of what they can become if they have any interest in science, and they will meet some cool women willing to show them the way to get there,” said Claggett.

AWIS Strategy Session Modern Manners for the Career Woman

By Valerie Uzzell

AWIS members and guests showed up in record numbers for the April Strategy Session on Business Etiquette. Why the excellent attendance? It may have been because guests of AWIS members were allowed to attend this strategy session for a fee, which could be put toward an AWIS membership. Or it may have been the important subject matter, “Business Etiquette: Communicating your best professional impression in person, by phone and by e-mail.” Whatever the reason, the moderator, Peggy Wallace of *Making Conversation, LLC.*, drew in attendees. Wallace discussed common business etiquette confusions and faux pas, and how to avoid them.

The session began with an amusing icebreaker. We were asked to describe the worst case of business etiquette we had experienced. From the stories, it is clear that the business world is full of rude behavior. One of my favorite examples was in the middle of an interview, the interviewee pulled out her blackberry to check email! Another story also involved a job interview. An interviewee was taken to lunch and afterwards proceeded to use both hands to visibly pick his teeth free of corn-on-the-cob residue. Neither candidate got the job, which is perhaps a lesson in the importance of proper business etiquette.

Making conversation with colleagues is a crucial aspect of business etiquette. Wallace suggests the best rule of thumb for making conversation, and indeed for most aspects of business etiquette, is to show respect to the person to whom you are speaking. Listen and be interested in what they have to say, and take care to avoid offense. Follow these simple tips:

- ✓ Wear a nametag on the upper right part of the chest to be visible when shaking hands.
- ✓ Shake hands firmly, with three up and down strokes.
- ✓ Exchange business cards (establish rapport first, and *read* the business card given to you).
- ✓ Discuss safe topics, such as the event you are attending, and avoid discussing politics or religion.

After covering face-to-face etiquette, we discussed appropriate telephone and internet etiquette. How easy it is to offend someone over email? The rules of thumb include:

- ✓ Show respect.
- ✓ Spell-check.
- ✓ Avoid using humor.
- ✓ *Never* send emails in rush or late at night.

After having a chance to apply these principles to specific case studies, I think we all realized the importance of thinking through our words and actions to avoid the consequences of poor etiquette: offending coworkers, failing to communicate, or failing to get that job or promotion. For myself, I know I will try hard to remember the simplest and most crucial principle of business etiquette: Respect.

AWIS MEMBER NEWS

The newsletter committee says farewell to **Amber Dance**. Amber will be working this summer as an intern at the LA Times. In the fall, she will begin the science writing certificate program at UC Santa Cruz. Congratulations Amber!

Former AWIS-San Diego Board Member Susan Forsburg Named an AWIS Fellow By Carl Marziali, *USC Today*

Long a de facto role model for women in academia, USC College biologist Susan Forsburg has made it official by becoming a fellow of the Association for Women in Science.



Philip Channing, courtesy of USC

Forsburg and nine others were honored Feb. 18 in San Francisco at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. They join an influential group of more than 100 association fellows dedicated to achieving equity and full participation of women in science. Saying she was honored to be chosen, Forsburg attached more importance to the influence of the award on women starting their careers in science. “What it shows is that hard work and our efforts

pay off,” she said in an interview at the ceremony. “We can be recognized by our peers. Any recognition benefits all of us.”

Women in all fields, she said, can be overlooked despite their accomplishments. An honor such as becoming AWIS fellow raises the recipient’s profile and sends a message to other women that they can succeed as well. And, Forsburg added, “the women fellows are also great resources for women coming up in the ranks.”

AWIS President Donna Dean praised Forsburg for her academic accomplishments (she was named one of the top 10 women in cancer research by *Pink* magazine) and for her Women in Biology Internet page, “a popular Web site that is accessed internationally.”

The site, www.womenbio.net, is packed with advice and resources for women with a Ph.D. who are seeking careers in academia or industry. Forsburg has said she is “especially proud of a comprehensive set of links to so-called ‘alternative careers’ sites as

well as information about surviving every step of the academic path.”

She is also heavily involved in USC's Women in Science and Engineering (WiSE), a highly successful program designed to increase the representation and success of women in the sciences. WiSE has attracted national attention, and Forsburg was quoted last year in an article on the program in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Forsburg, a professor of biological sciences, is best known for her work on cell division and cancer using the test organism *Schizosaccharomyces pombe*, a simple, single-celled yeast species. *S. pombe* is much easier to study than complex organisms, yet it shares many features with humans. Forsburg's work on the species helps illustrate the mechanics of cell division in humans.

She is also a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a recipient of the Stohlman Scholar Award from the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

USC Today, Feb. 21, 2007. © University of Southern California. Reprinted with permission.



San Diego Chapter

Website: <http://www.AWISsd.org>

E-mail: awissd@awissd.org

Mail: AWIS, San Diego Chapter
PO Box 178096
San Diego, CA 92177-8096

National Chapter

Telephone: (202) 326-8940

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Schedule:

May 14, 2007 Mon. 8-12 AM
May 16, 2007 Weds 8-12 AM
May 18, 2007 Fri 8-12 AM

Limited to 8 Attendees
Registration Fee: \$180
For registration information contact:
Sandra Slivka Ph.D.
Director Southern CA Biotechnology Center
619-388-7490; sslivka@sccd.edu

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.

May/June Newsletter staff:

Siobhan Malany	Janice Payne	Sama Tamrakar
Amber Dance	Paula C. Soto	

If you are an AWIS-SD member, we encourage you to contribute articles to the Newsletter. Please send articles as MS Word attachments to newsletter@awissd.org. News articles should not exceed 250 words, and event summaries should not exceed 500 words. Feature articles (special-interest stories and profiles) should not exceed 1000 words. The submission deadline for the next issue is June 1, 2007.

Not getting AWIS-SD member e-mails?

Update your contact information!

Go to the member services page using the following link:

<https://www.sgmeet.com/awis/memberlogin.asp>

You will need your member ID and password. If you need assistance, please contact AWIS Member Services by phone (866-657-AWIS) or by e-mail (membership@awis.org).

AWIS-San Diego Sponsors

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

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