President's Letter
By Anna-Maria Hays

As recently elected president of our San Diego Chapter of AWIS (AWIS-SD), I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself as I begin this exciting and challenging role. Three years ago I moved to San Diego to begin my postdoctoral training and was searching for a venue which would allow me to grow both professionally and personally. As I have learned as a member of GWIS (Graduate Women in Science) and other scientific societies: by participating in such organizations one can form a strong professional network and help young aspiring scientists (as I had been helped by several significant mentors throughout my career.) Thus, I joined the San Diego Chapter two and a half years ago as Outreach and Scholarship Chair, which gave me the opportunity to not only contribute to many of the overall goals of our chapter, participate in many exciting AWIS events, and reach out to our community, but also form both a strong professional network as well as a close circle of friends.

In the past several years our Chapter has grown significantly thanks to the diligent efforts of our past president Elaine Weidenhammer and past board members. As many of you know, AWIS-SD is committed to supporting the advancement of women in science and science-related fields by providing opportunities to participate in professional networking, mentoring, and leadership activities. My goal is to continue these efforts by recruiting current and new members to actively participate in AWIS events and committees. We need more volunteers so that together as a team we can continue to expand upon our current assets and help AWIS-SD achieve its long-standing commitment to foster the careers of women science professionals.

We have several exciting events coming up, such as our Open House and Networking event on July 25 (visit our website at [http://awis.npaci.edu/shml/evnts.shtml](http://awis.npaci.edu/shml/evnts.shtml) for details) to which I strongly encourage and welcome all of you to attend, not only to meet fellow AWIS members and network but also to see how you personally can make a significant contribution to our efforts. I cannot reiterate enough how AWIS has been an asset to my own personal and professional growth and I hope you take the opportunity to explore how AWIS can help you as well. You may also have your own ideas on how to contribute to our Chapter, and those are always very welcome. Please become active! It’s such a valuable way to give back to a community that is there for you, and a great way to learn new skills and meet potential peers and mentors.

Again, thank you for this exciting opportunity and I look forward to meeting and interacting with all of you throughout! If you have any questions, comments, or ideas for our local AWIS chapter, please contact me at [haysam@scripps.edu](mailto:haysam@scripps.edu).

Women In Bioscience Conference 2003
By Alycen Nigro

Hello Everyone! Are you bored with sunshine and days at the beach? Wishing you had something to do with all your free time besides lounge in the beautiful San Diego weather? Sure you are, and I have just the opportunity for you! Despite the distractions outside, AWIS-San Diego is up and running with several interesting upcoming events, including the Women in Biosciences (WIB) VI conference to be held May 3, 2003. While spring may seem far away when looking at the calendar, in terms of planning and preparation it is just around the corner! With that in mind, we want your help in shaping the direction and focus of WIB 2003. As always the main goals of WIB are:

- To promote networking among women pursuing careers in any science related field.
- To introduce women who are entering the biosciences to the many opportunities that are available in this vast field.
- To mentor women who are looking for a career change.
- To showcase positive role models and highlight the achievements of women scientists.
- To provide a forum for identifying and utilizing the skills, strategies, and resources necessary to be a success within the biotech or academic communities.

WIB 2001 was a great success with over 300 attendees, 16 workshops and numerous speakers. This year we hope to have an even bigger turnout with interesting speakers and helpful workshops! As co-chairs of the WIB 2003 committee, Anna-Maria Hays and I (Alycen Nigro) invite your ideas and participation to make WIB 2003 the best conference yet. The sub-committees include speakers, publicity, publications, facilities, fundraising, and website/registration. As a member of numerous committees within AWIS-San Diego, I can guarantee that participating in the planning and execution of WIB 2003 will give you the opportunity to meet and work closely with other members of AWIS in a fun and relaxed setting.

Current Committee Chairs:
- WIB Conference: Alycen Nigro and Anna-Maria Hays
- Speakers Committee: Anjali Kansagara and Swanie Schmidt
- Volunteers: Katie Kline
- Facilities Committee: Kathy Ogilive

So, get out of that sunshine (it will only cause wrinkles anyway!) and join, or better yet, chair or co-chair one of the above sub-committees and help us make WIB 2003 a great success. If you want to sign up or have any questions about the committees or WIB, please email me (anigro@hewm.com) by August 1, 2002, so that we can have our first organizational meeting by mid August. Have a great summer and don't forget your sunscreen!

Solicitation for 2003/4 Board members
By Anna-Maria Hays

We are soliciting nominations for five new board positions for the upcoming 2003/2004 AWIS Executive Board. If you would like to nominate an AWIS member for one of the five positions, please contact me (haysam@scripps.edu) by September 15, 2002.
Meet our Corporate Sponsor
By Janice Payne

AWIS would like to thank Pfizer/Agouron for their support as a platinum sponsor of the 2002 AWIS scholarship fund.

Agouron, established in 1984, was acquired by Warner Lambert in 1999. In June 2000, Pfizer and Warner Lambert merged and the resulting company kept the Pfizer name. Pfizer has since become the world’s largest drug maker, and has the largest privately funded biomedical organization. Pfizer markets several best-selling prescription medications, including Lipitor, Celebrex and Viagra.

The La Jolla campus of Pfizer/Agouron employs about 1,500 people and their specialty is structure-based drug design, with a focus on development of therapeutics to treat viruses, cancer, diabetes, eye diseases and obesity. They are best known for the protease inhibitor, VIRACEPT®, which was released in March 1997 and has been approved for treatment of HIV in adults and children. At that time, Agouron became the first biotech company in San Diego to market a therapeutic drug based on its own research.

Pfizer is currently expanding the La Jolla campus with construction of an 800,000 square foot facility in the Torrey Pines area, that will include eight buildings. In May 2002, they held a grand opening ceremony attended by Governor Gray Davis and other local officials. Three buildings are now occupied and the remaining buildings should be open by 2004.

As part of their support for women, the local campus has formed the Pfizer La Jolla Women’s Network, which meets once a month to promote professional support and career development among women employees.

“I enjoy my work here and do not feel there are any limits to my career based on gender,” commented AWIS member Janet White, Assistant Director, Strategic Management Group. “Our site director is Dr. Catherine Mackey, and we have women heading up our Finance, Informatics, Human Resources and Regulatory Affairs functions. On the scientific side, women head up our Virology, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology departments, and 50% of our drug development projects are led by women. On the commercial side of Pfizer, Karen Katen heads up all of Sales and Marketing at Corporate headquarters in New York, reporting directly to our CEO.”

Another AWIS member, Jane Chambers, Senior Associate Scientist, Drug Safety Evaluation at Pfizer/Agouron, offered these comments, “I enjoy my work here and do not feel there are any limits to my career based on gender. I have had a lot of opportunities to get involved with discovery project teams and have learned a great deal about the process of drug discovery and development. There is a team environment, giving ample opportunity to meet and discuss the different aspects of the variety of disciplines in research and development.”
Pfizer has two websites that contain health information for women on a variety of conditions including heart disease, reproductive health, and nutrition. Visit these at www.pfizerforwomen.com or www.pfizerwomenhealth.com. For more information about career opportunities at Pfizer, visit www.pfizer.com or www.agouron.com.

Thanks to Pfizer/Agouron for their generous support of AWIS over the last several years and for their support of women in the workplace.

Alternative Career Socials
By Tobey Tam

After the April Mentoring Happy Hour event, a number of people within the bioinformatics and law group (separately) have been trying to get together every other month for a social lunch and/or happy hours. We have been pretty successful in gathering people within those fields to help mentor each other and network. If you are interested in either of these social gatherings, we would like you to join us. Contact Tobey Tam at tobey_tam@yahoo.com to get on our email list.

AWIS San Diego Open House in July
By Anjali Kansagara

It is my pleasure to announce that the Membership/Publicity Committee is sponsoring the Bi-Annual Open House which will feature a workshop on networking. Come find out how you can learn to use membership in AWIS to your benefit! Please take a moment to visit the website designated below and consider attending this event...it may be just what you're looking for to help you get to the next step in your career!

Here are the details in brief:

What: AWIS Open House & Workshop on Networking
When: Thursday July 25, 2002
Where: The Salk Institute Auditorium
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Registration site: http://awis.npaci.edu/shtml/events_openhouse.shtml

You must register in order to attend the free workshop. Please check out the Open House/Networking Workshop webpage: http://awis.npaci.edu/shtml/events_openhouse_info.shtml
For general information visit: http://awis.npaci.edu/
Please contact me (anjali@zety.com) or any other Membership/Publicity Committee member for more information.

We look forward to seeing you at the Open House event.

The members of the Membership/Publicity Committee are:
Karen Arden (karden@ucsd.edu), Susi Jennings (spena@ucsd.edu), Jodi Connolly (jconnoll@scripps.edu), Tobey Tam (tobey_tam@yahoo.com), Tammy Lindell (tamyllindell@hotmail.com), Karen Lucas (kikilerm@ucsd.edu), Alycen Nigro (Anigro@HEWM.com), Courtney Sherman (Sherm17@hotmail.com), Swanie Schmidt (swanieschmidt@hotmail.com), Karin Zeh (kzeh@yahoo.com)

Join us in August for a tour of the labs of the Center for Reproduction of Endangered Species (CRES) at the San Diego Zoo. CRES was founded in 1975 and is one of the largest zoo-based research centers in the world. More than 90 CRES scientists are part of research programs in behavioral biology, genetics, pathology and reproductive physiology. They are dedicated to preserving and protecting rare and endangered species. The tour will take place on August 27 from 6-8 p.m. and will be limited to 30 AWIS members. Registration forms will be emailed to AWIS-SD members early in August.

May 2002 AWIS Event
Alternative and Complementary Medicine
By Jan Payne

“Just as you cannot take a drug to correct an error, you cannot take a medicine to correct an error.”

This quote, circa 1930, from Dr. Victor Rocine, a Norwegian homeopath, was recounted by one of our speakers, Erina Raskin at our panel discussion on Alternative and Complementary Medicine at Ligand Pharmaceuticals on May 7. This long-awaited event evolved into a lively discussion of nutrition, herbs, Chinese medicine and even genetically engineered foods.

Ms Raskin, M.S., L.Ac. earned her Master’s degree at the American College of Traditional Chinese Medicine. She is a licensed acupuncturist, herbalist and certified Hatha Yoga instructor. She is currently a clinical supervisor at the Pacific College of Oriental Medicine.

Our second panelist, Justine Greene, M.D., attended medical school at the University of Texas and completed a residency in Family Medicine at the University of California, Irvine. She also earned a M.S. degree in Traditional Oriental Medicine from the Pacific College of Oriental Medicine. Dr. Greene is Board certified in Family Practice and currently sees patients at Scripps Clinic. Her focus is alternative medicine.

Our third panelist was Diana Fatayerji, Ph.D., who earned her Ph.D. in biochemistry at the University of Sheffield in the United Kingdom. She has authored a series of publications on the changes in bone density that can occur with age. She also has a M.S. degree in Human Nutrition and is currently in practice as an alternative nutritionist.

Each member of our panel gave us some insight into their methods of diagnosis and treatment. Dr. Fatayerji’s goal with a patient is to prevent health issues through diet. High cholesterol, high blood pressure and various digestive disorders respond well to dietary changes. She prefers to have a full blood panel done on a patient prior to making any dietary recommendations.

Dr. Greene has been trained in traditional Chinese medicine and she mentioned the Chinese pattern of diagnosis. This includes examining the tongue, eyes, skin and nails for changes in color or swelling. Smell and sounds of illness are also important in making a diagnosis and deciding on treatment.

Ms. Raskin prefers a combination of Oriental and Western medicine. Patients have usually been diagnosed at the time they are referred to her and she treats them with a variety of methods including acupuncture, Ayurvedic medicine, naturopathic medicine and yoga. She maintains a website, www.erin.freehosting.net that contains helpful information on a range of topics including aromatherapy, massage, stress and meditation. Another helpful educational website that was mentioned was www.preccs.net. (Article continued on next page.)
Finding an alternative medicine practitioner is best done by obtaining referrals from family or friends. Unfortunately most insurance carriers won’t cover the services mentioned and our three panelists usually receive payment from the patient. Depending on the health condition, these treatments could provide valuable alternatives for the patient who prefers not to rely on pharmaceuticals.

Many thanks to Erin, Justine and Diana for their insight and presentations at this event!

Outreach Committee Brings Science Fun to the Foster Care Community

By Jodi L. Connolly

What do slime, cabbage, chromatography, baking soda and vinegar have in common? The AWIS-SD Outreach Committee!

On Sunday, May 26, Outreach Committee members Megan Bolla, Christie Canaria, Nhi Le, Tobey Tam, Rachel Taylor, and Janet White attended “Fostering the Family Fun Day,” a program to raise awareness for foster care in San Diego County, which was sponsored by Walden Family Services and the Fern Street Circus.

The event, held at Balboa Park, drew approximately 600 foster care children and their families for a pancake breakfast, circus activities, and a performance by the Fern Street Circus. AWIS-SD was invited to the event to generate an excitement for science among the young people present, as well as to raise awareness about careers in science. The Outreach committee presented a variety of hands-on activities including making slime, learning about pH using cabbage, and discovering chromatography using markers and coffee filters. Overall, Outreach member Tobey Tam said, “It was a huge success! Many kids kept coming back for more.” The overwhelming success the Outreach Committee has had with such events has left them in high demand. In order to meet all the requests the Outreach Committee receives for science activities and career presentations, more volunteers are needed! If you are interested in joining the Outreach Committee, or would simply like to volunteer for an upcoming event, please visit the website: http://awis.npaci.edu/shtml/out.shtml or contact Jodi Connolly at jconnoll@scripps.edu.

The Outreach Committee is currently seeking volunteers for the following activities:

1. Elementary Institute of Science (http://www.eisca.org): volunteers needed for an interactive scientific or career presentation for kids aged 7-13, any Wednesday morning in July or August.

2. Expanding Your Horizons (http://www.sdsa.org/EYH): volunteers needed to assist Outreach members with 3 scientific demonstration/career workshops for 6-10th grade girls, Saturday, October 12, 2002.

3. Girl Scouts Career Day: the Outreach Committee is looking for additional AWIS members with science-related careers willing to share their experiences with young girls, November 2, 2002.

4. AWIS-SD junior and senior high school mentoring program: volunteers needed to help establish and participate in this program (see next article in this newsletter).

Mentoring Magic: Make a Difference

By Rachel Taylor

The Outreach Committee is excited to be developing a new mentoring program for girls in junior and senior high school. The goal of this program will be to encourage young women to pursue higher education and careers in science. We would like to focus our efforts on students with limited opportunities in science. By providing positive role models we hope to show young women that scientific careers can be fun and rewarding for both men and women. The ideas that we are currently exploring for the program include job shadowing, career day presentations, hands-on workshops, and developing long-term mentoring relationships with students.

In order for this program to be successful we need volunteers in the San Diego area who are passionate about science and education. In addition to volunteers, we are asking for feedback and ideas from people with prior experience with mentoring programs. For more information about Outreach please visit http://awis.npaci.edu/shtml/out.shtml or to volunteer for this program please visit http://awis.npaci.edu/shtml/out_mentor.shtml.

April 2002 AWIS/GWIS Event

Anthrax and Bioterrorism

By Janice Payne

The first envelope arrived at the offices of American Media, Inc. in Boca Raton, Florida, and Robert Stevens, a photo editor employed there, died of inhalation anthrax on October 5, 2001. One by one, tainted envelopes began arriving at the offices of NBC News anchor Tom Brokaw, Senator Tom Daschle, and the New York Post. Each news report of another contaminated envelope served to make millions of Americans extremely anxious and it threw the postal service into a state of chaos. By December 5, 2001, twenty-two people had contracted anthrax and five of those had died from the disease. Would San Diego be prepared for such an attack of bioterrorism?

That question and many more were answered at our joint AWIS/GWIS event on April 18 at the San Diego County Health Department. Our speakers for the evening, both from the San Diego County Department of Health and Human Services, were Michele Ginsberg, M.D., Chief of Community Epidemiology, and Jill Giesick, Supervising Public Health Microbiologist.

Dr. Ginsberg attended medical school at the State University of New York Downstate and in addition to her duties at the County Health Department, she teaches at San Diego State University for the Public Health Department and she is an adjunct professor in the Division of Epidemiology at UCSD Medical School. One focus of Dr. Ginsberg’s presentation was the history of bioterrorism, with mention of the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention, at which 100 nations, including the U.S. and U.S.S.R., agreed not to research or produce biological weapons. That same year, the Soviets began a massive biological weapons program and in 1979, there was an outbreak of anthrax in Sverdlosk, U.S.S.R., which resulted in 66 deaths. The Soviets claimed the source of the anthrax was contaminated meat but it was later revealed that the anthrax spores had been released from a bioweapons facility approximately 15 miles upwind of the anthrax victims. 
Dr. Ginsberg also described the different forms of anthrax infection: inhalational, cutaneous and gastrointestinal. These forms are not contagious and, if caught early enough, all should respond to antibiotics.

Our second speaker, Jill Giesick, who has 20 years of experience with the County Health Department, discussed the microbiology of the anthrax bacteria. She described the characteristics of Bacillus anthracis, which is a gram-positive rod-shaped bacteria that is nonhemolytic and non-motile. It is capable of forming hearty, long-lasting spores, which can then be aerosolized. The anthrax spores that infiltrated the postal service had been treated not to clump, thus allowing them to be disseminated through an envelope into the air upon pressure from postal machinery.

Ms. Geisick then described the network of public health laboratories that must coordinate their activities when an outbreak occurs. Level A labs are clinical labs that rule out various agents. If they cannot identify an agent, they pass it to a Level B lab. Level B labs are public health labs that provide limited confirmation and transport of suspicious agents. Level C labs are State labs and they have the equipment necessary to perform molecular assays and PCR to identify microbes. Level D labs are the highest level of Federal labs and include the CDC and USAMRIID.

Finally and most importantly, would San Diego be prepared for an attack of bioterrorism? Preparation actually began in 1997 with the establishment of the San Diego Metro Medical Response system, which includes the Metro Medical Strike Team (MMST), the Rapid Response Team (RRT), the Office of Disaster Preparedness and others. The MMST includes personnel from law enforcement, fire departments, hospitals, public health and the military. They have joint training exercises to ensure a proper response during an attack of bioterrorism. Also established in 1999 in San Diego County was the Emergency Medical Alert Network, which allows communication between healthcare and public health professionals. Visit their website at [www.emansandiego.com](http://www.emansandiego.com)

Many thanks to GWIS for allowing us to join them and to Dr. Ginsberg and Ms. Giesick for their presentations at this event! Editor's note: There are several articles on this topic in the 14 June 2002 Journal Science Vol. 296 No. 5575 pages 1954 - 1956, 1976-1979, and 2028 - 2033.

The B. anthracis strain that caused the Florida fatalities and the strains used in the New York and Washington, DC attacks were all analyzed by VNTR (variable number tandem repeat) and found to be of the same source, a strain originally isolated from a dead cow in Texas in 1981. The strain was designated Ames and was sent to the US Army Medical Research Institute (USAMRIID) in Fort Detrick, Maryland where it was used in the U.S. defensive biological weapons program (in the mid 1950's the Institute conducted an offensive biological weapons program which was ended in 1969 by then President Nixon.) The Florida strain was further characterized by a group at TIGR (The Institute for Genome Research) using Comparative Genome Sequencing. The analysis revealed 60 new markers that can be used to compare the relatedness of other isolates these new markers may prove useful in identifying the source of the Florida, New York and Washington, DC isolates.

May/June AWIS Book Review

The Red Queen: Sex and the Evolution of Human Nature by Matt Ridley
Review by Lynn Fink

What is human nature and how did it come to be? Matt Ridley attempts to answer this question in The Red Queen by first examining the evolution of human sexuality, of which, Ridley claims, human nature is essentially a by-product. The Red Queen is an ambitious analysis of the reproductive behaviors of many organisms and how they relate to human practices. Ridley approaches this analysis from an evolutionary perspective citing the need to constantly refresh our gene pool by recombining our genetic material in order to maintain an evolutionary advantage over parasites and predators. Ridley guides the reader through a fascinating array of courtship rituals, reproductive practices, and the possible reasons that gave rise to each, from viruses to rotifers to turkeys in order to fathom imponderables such as the constancies of adultery and violence in human society. A zoologist by training and a journalist by trade, he handles the material deftly and writes in an engaging style. Ridley refers to many primary sources from experts in their respective fields and the large bibliography is a testament to the huge amount of research that went into this book. The book club members enjoyed reading The Red Queen and gave it 4 out of 5 stars. There were some criticisms, however, about the accuracy and currency of the content. Indeed, experts in the field will note that some of the material is, at this point, rather dated and other material is only anecdotal. Whether the author successfully explores the nature of human nature was also questioned since much of the material discussed does not relate to human behavior on an evolutionary level. Ultimately, these misgivings were tempered since the enjoyability of the book rests on the wonderful stories about the bizarre lives of other organisms.

AWIS Members On the Move……

Tobey Tam, AWIS Book Club Chair, recently accepted a position as a Scientific Advisor at Heller Ehrman White & McAuliffe LLP. Her background has been in neuroscience and bioinformatics, which she hopes will be very useful in her new career. She begins her new job on July 1.

Jodi Connolly, AWIS Outreach Chair, has just accepted a position at Heller Ehrman White & McAuliffe LLP as a Scientific Advisor. She moved to San Diego less than a year ago for a postdoc position at The Scripps Research Institute. She will begin her new job on July 1.

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The AWIS e-mail list will keep you up-to-date (between newsletters) with news of job opportunities, AWIS news and events. To subscribe, please send e-mail to [sdawis@san.rr.com](mailto:sdawis@san.rr.com).
Include your full name, address, and phone number.

The San Diego Chapter of AWIS Welcomes New Members:

By Susi Jennings

Teresa Brandt - Johns Hopkins University
Anette Breindl - Atkins + Associates
Caroline Lanigan
Vach Nichols - DISC
Maria Pistone - Arcturus Applied Genomics
Stephanie Reider

Foley & Lardner
Agilent Technologies
Scripps Institution of Oceanography
Salk Institute

Teresa Spehar
Alberta Stanfield
Margot Stiles
Elaine Tan

July/August 2002
Moving? Address Change?
Please notify us of your new address so you won't miss our mailings! E-mail Anjali Kansagara at sdawis@san.rr.com, phone the AWIS voicemail: (619) 687-5580, or mail changes to AWIS - San Diego, PO Box 178096, 92177-8096.

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About the AWIS Newsletter

The AWIS Newsletter is published bimonthly 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. Subscription rate for non-members is $20 a year.

July/August Newsletter staff:
Janice Payne  Tobey Tam
Barbara Armstrong  Cathy Manner  Joanne Mullen
Send news items, comments, and subscription requests to Barbara Armstrong via e-mail: nawis@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 August 9, 2002.