



Newsletter

President's Letter

By Jenny Chaplin

Dear AWIS members,

The clock is ticking as we gear up for the ninth Women in Science and Technology conference on May 9. The committee has been working really hard to pull this event together and make sure that it is of the same high quality as previous years. I am really excited about the conference and am looking forward to so many of the workshops, as well as the keynote speakers, Maria Freire and Karin McBride. If you haven't done so yet, you have until May 6 to register at <http://awis.sdsc.edu/WIST/registration.htm>.

While on the subject of WIST, I would like to thank the entire WIST planning committee for all their effort and hard work and especially my co-chair, Rachel Soloff, for her dedication and support. It has been a pleasure working with everyone on the committee.

I'd like to welcome any new members who will be receiving this newsletter for the first time. AWIS is a wonderful organization in which to get to know fellow women in STEM and to learn new skills. The best way to improve your network is by volunteering; it also has many additional benefits, such as

improving confidence, acquiring planning or writing skills, and improving leadership. To all members: don't forget our new member benefits, the AWIS-SD group on www.linkedin.com and Coffee Clubs. The LinkedIn group is growing and the number of posts is increasing with that growth. Feel free to use the group to blog about issues that you may be facing at work, general issues facing women in STEM, suggestions for our chapter and general advice that you may need. Our first coffee club for Early Career Transitions on April 9, led by Shauna McGillivray, was a success and enjoyed by those that attended. We hope to bring you more Coffee Clubs after the dust of WIST has settled and we can focus on those activities. Once again, if you have an idea for a Coffee Club, please don't hesitate to let me know (president@awissd.org) or post it on our LinkedIn group for more discussion.

Best wishes

Jenny Chaplin

Strategy Session

by Callie Craig

You've polished your resume, networked tirelessly, and finally landed a job interview! What are the keys to making it a success? Whether new to the job market or just feeling a bit rusty, the April 6th Strategy Session, "Interviewing Techniques," offered great advice for everyone.

Grace Nakayama opened the session with an overview of the process. Topics included the purpose, sequence, types, and formats of interviews. A few highlights:

- Many companies now employ Competency-Based Behavioral Interviewing. Be ready to give specific examples which demonstrate both your technical and interpersonal skills.
- Have two professional outfits in your closet- you might be asked back for a second interview the next day.
- Some topics are off-limits during the interview process, such as marital status, family, health, race, and religion. If you are asked an inappropriate question, the best response is to remain pleasant, and shift the course of conversation without revealing private information.

Caroline Barr, Human Resources Lead Recruiter at Biogen Idec, then shared her perspective on the hiring process. She addressed the seemingly mysterious fate of resumes submitted online, and suggested that replying to a specific job announcement is the most effective way to get your resume seen. A few other points Caroline emphasized:

- Keep your resume clear, concise, and uncluttered.
- Take a phone interview seriously- schedule it for a time when you will not be distracted.

- Be sure to ask questions of everyone you meet. Do your research and plan questions ahead of time.
- Have a list of eight things you want people to know about you, with specific examples illustrating each point.
- Always follow up.

Dody Sears and Linda Manza then led the group through an exercise in the STAR (Situation Task Action Result) approach to answering Competency-Based Behavioral Interviewing questions. The exercise made it clear just how much forethought and practice are required to prepare for this type of interview. Visit www.quintcareers.com/intvres.html for examples.

The session was concluded by Linda Manza, who offered her perspective as a hiring manager, and Valerie Uzzell, who offered her perspective as a recent hire. Linda emphasized the importance of doing your research about the company and the position, so you will be prepared to ask the right questions. Valerie stressed that the interview process is just that- she went through a series of three grueling interviews with her prospective employer before getting a job offer.

What did we learn? Interviewing can be a strenuous process, but by thoroughly preparing ahead of time, and following up after, we now have the tools to help us land that new job. Good luck hunting!

The next Strategy Session, Negotiating Skills, will take place June 8th at Biogen Idec from 6-8 pm. Hope to see you there!

UCSD GradWISE Hosts: Lessons from Local Women in STEM Industry
by Erin Dunn

Are you thinking about pursuing a career in the science, engineering or technology industry? Did you know that women are twice as likely as men to exit the science and engineering industries? On March 5th, UCSD Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) hosted a discussion panel to inform women of the challenges and benefits of pursuing a science or technology career in industry versus academia. Local industry professionals in a range of STEM fields were invited to share their stories and answer questions.

The panelists were Raee Dasnurkar, Network Planning Engineer at Qualcomm; Charlotte Dryden, MBA, Program Manager at Qualcomm; Andrea Fanjul, PhD, Senior Principal Scientist at Pfizer, Inc.; Eunhwa Lenehan, Program Manager at Applied MicroCircuits Corp; and Sharon Wampler, PhD, Cofounder and Vice President of Bio4Front Inc. The discussion was chaired by UCSD assistant professors Vibha Bhatnagar, MD, MPH and Silvia Resta-Lenert, MD, PhD.

Most of these women have made several career transitions. Sharon worked in industry before getting her PhD in Biology at UCSD and liked the process of developing a product with a team. As a post-doc, she worked for several companies before trying her hand at marketing and business and then spent the last six years at UCSD Rady School of Business developing a continuing education program for transitioning to industry. Spurred by a passion for integrative medicine, and communicating the efficacy of therapies, she recently co-

founded Bio4Front Inc. Sharon says “play to your skills” and don’t be swayed from your real passion.

At the same time, says Charlotte, sometimes a company sees things in you that you don’t. Charlotte holds a double major in biomedical and electrical engineering and although she really enjoys engineering, companies have consistently put her in a business role so she eventually got an MBA. Charlotte stresses the importance of pursuing something that fulfills you intellectually, but gives you balance in your life. High-achieving women often lose sight of this.

Panel members commented on their experience with gender bias. As a network planner, Raee works on teams consisting mostly of men and feels that a lot of gender bias is not purposeful. Men and women just communicate differently. “Try to remember no one is out to get you... usually,” Raee chuckles. Andrea came from Argentina and worked for several small companies before becoming a scientist at Pfizer. Speaking from experience, she points out that you can run into demeaning and sexist people. In addition to recognizing it and confronting it, “you have to regain your self-esteem and move on.”

Not surprisingly, the discussion turned to the issue of finding and keeping a job in a crippled economy. Eunhwa was recently laid off following a down-sizing at Applied Micro Circuits Corporation (AMCC), but is optimistic because of her experience and broad knowledge. Members of the panel agreed that a layoff can be a crushing blow, but then you realize you’re still smart and talented. Consider all your options: government, health industry, internships that give you new skills or a new

perspective. “Be gentle with yourself, we are all very judgmental of ourselves and think everyone has expectations of us.”

Of course with the current economy, most of us would be happy to find a job at any company, but what should we look for in an employer? Learn about the culture of a company, talk to people who work there- get their perspectives. Do they have a good work-life balance? Use networking groups like WISE and AWIS to find out about the reputation of a company. But don't be too anxious- this probably won't be your last job. Instead, really focus on what you would like to do or what you would like to learn. Start-ups are fun, exciting and typically more casual- you can get to know your CEO. You can grow faster, be more easily recognized and learn more at a small company, but a big company may offer more stability and support more education.

By the end of the discussion, the message was clear: If you are thinking of delving into industry, be curious, honest, flexible, and balanced. Don't forget to network... and go for it!

Networking Skills Workshop

By Mindy Davis

The American Chemical Society (ACS) and Sino-American Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Professionals Association (SABPA) jointly sponsored a timely meeting on networking skills at Morrison & Foerster on March 19th. The guest speakers were 3 very accomplished women who shared their experiences and advice about how to develop and maintain a network.

Zhu Shen, PhD, MBA, and the CEO at BioForesight, shared her successes at cold calling and her father's timeless advice to not let anything hold her back since anything is possible. Shen has authored 2 articles “Unleash the Dragon” and “Unleash the Dragon 2” that discuss China's increasing worldwide presence in the Contract Research Organization (CRO) markets for biology and chemistry. Shen showed us how developing a LinkedIn network of 1500 people could, within two degrees of separation, access a network of over 6 million people. She expressed how important it is for a vital network to have give and take and to make sure we are giving back as well. Shen recommended AWIS, SABPA, ACS, San Diego Biotechnology Discussion Group, the Women in Science group and Athena as excellent local networking opportunities.

Peggy Wallace, Founder of Making Conversation LLC, provided many pointers about how to approach networking opportunities. One highlight of her presentation was how to read body language to decide whether a group is likely to be receptive to your joining the conversation. “Are their feet pointed straight at each other or is the stance more open?” indicating they would welcome you in. Another pointer was the EXIT strategy to wrap up the discussion and leave a positive impression:

- E= Express your appreciation and reiterate something of interest that you talked about.
- X= Shake hands.
- I= Indicate what you plan to do (for example, I will contact you next week).
- T= Take your leave and walk away.

Peggy said many people struggle with the EXIT strategy and either end up trapped with a person or darting away, leaving the other person wondering what happened. Peggy suggested practicing our new networking skills at the upcoming AWIS WIST conference (see <http://awis.sdsc.edu/WIST/> for details).

Victoria Tucker, managing partner of ZBglobal™, stressed that people will average 10-15 jobs and perhaps several careers over their lifetime, making it essential to stay marketable. Victoria recommended the following:

- Develop a personal Board of Directors of 5-7 mentors. Meet regularly to cover specific questions and concerns.
- Throw a “pink slip and wine” party where recently laid off associated gather to practice their personal sales pitch and get feedback.
- Pursue continuing education
- Constantly reinvent ourselves to keep up with the changing economy.

After the event I asked Victoria if she had additional specific ideas for AWIS members looking for new opportunities. Her advice: "In today's economy you may want to think of going after a portfolio of projects rather than a single position. Have you worked in a lab? Then what about pitching part time hours to one company to work in their lab, more part time hours to another (non-competitive) company where you can sell their product line, and other hours scattered throughout a month to yet another company to "mentor" some of their less experienced lab workers. Rather than compete with hundreds for one full time position, you will have found a way to 'distribute your eggs in more than one basket'... giving you an economic safety net, not to mention

becoming attractive to hiring companies who are trying to keep their costs down."

After the three talks there was a lively Q&A. Each of the speakers had many people approach them after the meeting seeking additional advice. Many business cards were exchanged at the light dinner before the presentation as well as afterwards. The local ACS chapter offers several career development workshops each year and SABPA also hosts a variety of events detailed on their websites.

The Science of Chocolate, A San Diego Science Festival Event

by Rachel A. Schwartz

On the evening of March 24, 2009 chocolate lovers of all ages packed the KPBS studio B at San Diego State University for the last in a series of seminars affectionately referred to by Larry Bock, founder of the month-long San Diego Science Festival, as the “Science of Decadence” events. Previous “decadent” topics covered the Science of Love, the Science of Beer, and the Science of Wine, but this night, participants savored the Science of Chocolate.

The evening began with a presentation by Chuao chocolatier, chef Michael Antonorsi. Although Antonorsi “was high-tech, [he] went high pleasure” by leaving his job as a bioengineer to become a chef and pursue a career in chocolate with his brother Richard. After a short film depicting the historical roots of cacao and the process of making chocolate, the audience tore into their

chocolate samples while Antonorsi led the tasting.

Each table compared chocolates of different origins (Venezuelan and African) and different percentages, a reflection of the amount of cacao ingredients in the chocolate. Although tasters enjoyed the nuttier, more acidic quality of 58% Venezuelan and the chalkier texture of 70% African chocolate, the familiar sweetness of the 58% blend was the clear choice.

Antonorsi probed the audience to “think outside the chocolate box” by suggesting various chocolate and wine or beer pairings. More fruit-forward wines tend to match better with chocolate in general. However, no rules apply when pairing beer and chocolate; just look for similar qualities in each. Chuao further demonstrated the versatility of chocolate by providing tasters with samples of his creations blended with either passion fruit or ancho chile.

Adding to the sweetness of the evening was the next speaker, Dr. Francisco Villarreal, a professor at the UCSD School of Medicine. Even though the participants present at the event didn't need convincing to consume more chocolate, Villarreal provided more food for thought. Dr. Villarreal spoke to the audience about the cardio-protective effects of eating chocolate and the history behind these findings.

The health benefits of chocolate have been known since the time of the Aztecs. However, more recently, specific compounds within cacao, called flavonoids, have been implicated in these processes. Villarreal spoke in detail about epicatechin, a flavonoid from chocolate that his lab discovered to be particularly cardio-protective. In fact, his lab found that

administering a purified form of epicatechin to animal models could reduce heart attacks and minimize their long-term detrimental effects.

Although purified epicatechin is not yet available, we can still benefit from its effects. So how much chocolate do you need to eat to see a health improvement? About 100 calories of 70% chocolate each day. If the chocolate is bitter, it is likely to be beneficial, since flavonoids taste this way. Importantly, Villarreal added, “You need to eat it everyday.” Sweet news for chocolate lovers.

Happy Hour

By Mindy Davis



The March 11th happy hour at Cozymel's was a great opportunity to use the speed networking skills developed at February's Strategy Session. About 30-35 people enjoyed a variety of appetizers, drinks, and desserts. This group was smaller than the previous AWIS happy hour and allowed many in-depth conversations. An interesting fact that I learned was that one of our local AWIS members has two pet llamas and that llamas really don't usually spit at people. A former AWIS scholarship winner from UCSD attended and was excited that many of her friends were applying for AWIS scholarships this year. There was a lot of buzz about the upcoming WIST conference in May. Many business cards were exchanged and, thanks to the volunteers from the social committee, a good time was had by all.

Three Cups of Tea

A book review by Ray Seraydarian

On Wednesday, January 28, the AWIS Book & Movie Club met at Leucadia Pizza to discuss the biography *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin.

After a failed attempt to summit K2, American Greg Mortenson became separated from his porter and climbing companions and stumbles alone into a tiny village high in the Karakoram Range of northeastern Pakistan. Instantly grateful to these people who have saved his life, he quickly learns that this village in the clouds is not an Edenic paradise: It takes a week to walk to the nearest doctor, many of the people suffer from malnutrition, one out of every three babies do not live to their first birthday, and weather permitting, the village children scratch their lessons in the dirt at an outdoor 'school.' Vowing to build a proper school for these people, and keenly aware of the importance of the education of girls in this strict Shi'ite Muslim community, Mortenson returns to Oakland, California, to begin what turns out to be a Herculean effort for a person of great passion but extremely modest means and zero fundraising experience. After many false starts, both in the US and in Central Asia, the ball slowly begins to roll. Mortenson has a miraculous natural ability to find good-hearted, yet savvy individuals from porters and cab drivers to accountants and helicopter pilots to help him navigate his way through unscrupulous merchants, bandits, and culturally or religiously conservative people who would cheat him or stop him outright. The book generated a lively discussion, and the members present gave it an excellent rating of 4.875 (out of 5).

Currently the Club is reading Margaret Atwood's *Payback*, "...an investigation into the idea of debt as an ancient and central motif in religion, literature, and the structure of human societies." Look for the review in the next newsletter and contact bookclub@awissd.org for more information regarding the book and movie club.

I Saw it on LinkedIn

AWIS-San Diego has an active LinkedIn site for members to share information and support through the message boards.

Question: Science Expo

The event was a huge success - 100,000 attendees. Unfortunately, I didn't get time to look around as my browsing time was taken up in traffic. What were the general thoughts of those that went? Was it worth it? Too busy? What was the standard of the exhibitions? If any of you took your kids, what did they think?

Question: Local Classes

Can anyone recommend good class(es) held in San Diego on the various aspects of preclinical development of therapeutic proteins, i.e. outlining the steps to IND?

See the answers, join in on these discussions, or start a new topic by joining the AWIS-SD LinkedIn Group (Insert link).

Upcoming Events

Science Fair Award Dinner:

Martin Johnson House SIO

May 3rd, 2009, 4-6 pm.

Event Description: Join the outreach committee for a dinner in honor of 8 bright young women who've been selected to receive the 2009 AWIS awards at the

Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair.

Women in Science and Technology Conference (WIST):

The Salk Institute

May 9th, 2009. 7:30 am

Event Description: The Women in bioScience" (WIB) conference is now the "Women in Science and Technology" (WIST) conference! For more information: <http://awis.sdsc.edu/WIST/>

AWIS Coaching Program Spring Career Tele-Seminars:

May 7th, 2009, 7pm Eastern

Networking Now - When Everyone is Looking: How To Be More Effective in the Current "Crowded" Marketplace

- May 14th, 2009. 11 am Eastern
Effective Communication in a Four Generation Workplace
- May 21st, 2009. Noon and 7pm, Eastern
Impression Management for Interviews
- May 28th, 2009. Noon, Eastern.
How to Keep Your Job in a Tough Economic Climate

Event Description: It's more important now than ever before to manage your career effectively. In May, the AWIS Coaching Program will offer a series of tele-seminars to help you do just that. Whether you want strategies for holding on to your job in a tough economic climate, tips for improving your networking or interviewing skills or tools you can use to communicate more effectively in a four-generation workplace, you'll find relevant, practical, ready-to-implement ideas in these programs. Each program is available at a special discounted rate of only \$14.95 for AWIS members and \$19.95 for non-members.

Coffee Club - Early Career Discussion Group

Grove Café, UCSD Campus

May 21, 2009. 8-9:00 am.

Event Description: Are you interested in expanding your network to include others who have similar interests and challenges? Please join us as we discuss our experiences over early morning coffee. It's a great way to network with fellow AWIS members and share ideas and encouragement.

Please note, you must be an AWIS member to participate and membership information can be found at <http://awis.sdsc.edu/join/>. For maps or directions to the Grove Cafe, please go to <http://www-act.ucsd.edu/maps/>. Parking is located next to the cafe for \$1/hour.

STRATEGY SESSION: Negotiating Skills:

Biogen Idec

June 8th, 2009

6:00 pm

Event Description: Make those difficult conversations work in your favor. Pre-registration is essential! AWIS-San Diego members may register for this event online at

http://awis.npaci.edu/calendar/eventdetails.php?event_id=497. This Strategy Session is free to all AWIS-San Diego members whose AWIS National and San Diego dues are current.