Letter from the AWIS-SD President Janet White
A Call for Volunteers for WIB Conference

K.I.S.S. – Keep It Simple, Stupid. This is an acronym that we all know well. In mathematics, the same principle is known as Occam’s Razor – simpler solutions are better. We all lead such busy lives, juggling work, home, social and volunteer commitments, and it’s worth pausing once in a while to consider whether we are adding unnecessary complexity. Attention to detail is an important attribute for scientists, but how often do we let it become an obsession in all aspects of our lives? AWIS is no exception. All our officers volunteer their precious time to support our organization, so let’s seek simple approaches to all we do and not create extra work for one another.

In September, we will start planning for our major event in 2005, the biennial Women in Bioscience (WIB) Conference, which will take place on Saturday, May 21. WIB 2003 attracted 25 speakers and 370 attendees for two plenary sessions and 12 workshops. Natalie Schiller and I will co-chair the Planning Committee for the upcoming Conference, and we would like to invite volunteers to join our seven subcommittees: Speakers, Facilities, Fundraising, Public Relations, Publications, Registration and Website.

Putting together a prestigious conference is a great experience and a wonderful opportunity to get involved, learn new skills and get to know other AWIS members. Best of all, Planning Committee members get to attend the conference for free. The planning meetings will take place on the first Wednesday of every month from 6 to 8 pm at the UCSD Connect offices located opposite El Torito Restaurant starting September 1. If you’d like to volunteer, please email me at janetwhite99@hotmail.com. And remember our guiding principle – K.I.S.S!

Strategy Session: Thinking Outside the Box: Tapping Into Your Creative Being
By Siobhan Malany

“What is creativity, and what does it mean to be creative?” Karin Zeh, moderator for the evening, asked a room full of participants still enjoying the catered selections. “The act of being creative; the ability to create,” Zeh continued, reading a dictionary’s definition.

We set off on our mission to collectively define the characteristics of creativity, and ask what is needed to be creative, what limits creativity and how we might apply creativity to the science we do. In turn, we blurted out what we defined as main characteristics: originality, expressiveness, imagination and curiosity. Creativity is the ability to think and approach a problem in an original way. To be creative, we need to possess knowledge of a process, a willingness to explore and the motivation to solve a problem.

We agreed that too much knowledge could hinder our creativity. How often have you discovered after completing an experiment that you took the more difficult path? Our thoughts are often guided by rules, preconceptions, and assumptions. Is this what it means to “think inside the box”? There are several examples where the science behind revolutionary discoveries was challenged. The invention of the laser, for example, was thought by many scientists to be impossible according to the laws of physics. Picasso said, “Every act of creation is first of all an act of destruction.” What if the opposite of our assumptions are correct? What would be the outcome? The founder of Digital Equipment Corporation should have asked this simple question in 1977 when he said, “There is no reason why anyone would want a computer in their home.”

“I will never paint like a Picasso,” Zeh stated. So, how do we, motivated scientists, tap into our creative being and put it into action in the workplace? Brainstorming was at the top of our lists as being the most effective way to get fresh ideas, new perspectives and different approaches to solving problems. Short brainstorming sessions can really get the creative juices flowing because they involve more divergent thinking and less analytical thinking. When brainstorming, be playful and imaginative. Don’t interrupt. Don’t criticize. Build on others’ ideas. Afterwards is the time to evaluate, to ask why and why not and to challenge assumptions. Then, try it.

On the job, we strive to resolve problems quickly and efficiently, and we strive to embrace a process. But, just tolerating a little lack of significance and a little disorder in our day may permit our team’s or our protégés’ creativity and imaginations to flourish.

Our ending task was to design our dream home. We jumped out of our chairs and began wildly drawing. As our arms intertwined, we shouted out ideas that inspired new ideas. Our dream home was an architectural nightmare, but it certainly was fun and creative and left us in an exuberant state of mind.

Inside this Issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inside this Issue</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEWS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter from AWIS-SD President Janet White</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June Strategy Session: Thinking Outside the Box</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June Event: Starting &amp; Building a Successful Business</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Ride Science Festival</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August Strategy Session: Productive Work Environment</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations Committee</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Sponsorship Committee</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Writing Course at UCSD Extension</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEATURES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Informed and Vote</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Surveys Biotech Programs</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Women’s Law Center</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEPARTMENTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Two Cents</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWIS Movie Review: “Spellbound”</td>
<td>4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWIS Book Review: “A Hope in the Unseen”</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Members</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWIS Member News</td>
<td>5-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWIS Chapter Contact Information</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
June Event: On Your Mark, Get Set, Go…Starting & Building a Successful Business  
By Barbara Armstrong

On June 15, the AWIS Events Committee, in conjunction with the Forum for Women Entrepreneurs (FWE), sponsored a very informative program on starting your own business. The speakers included Jessica Wenzell, Esq., an attorney with Luce, Forward, Hamilton & Scripps LLP, Ken M. Clark, a senior business advisor and small business services coordinator at Southwestern College Small Business Development & International Trade Center, and Tom Studebaker of Studebaker Biomedical Business Consultants.

Jessica Wenzell covered the legal aspects of starting a new business. She outlined seven different types of businesses: sole proprietorships, general partnerships, limited partnerships, profit and nonprofit corporations, and limited liability companies. Each type of business has rules regarding whether you need to file with the state to exist, how the business is taxed, whether it limits your liability (in order to protect your assets) and other issues. She also provided a list of very useful websites to search for registered business names, domain names, and lists of registered and unregistered trademarks.

Other legal issues Wenzell covered included: insurance, hiring employees and contractors, leasing commercial space, and advertising.

Ken Clark talked about the “ABC’s to Starting/ Growing & Financing Your Small Business.” His office at Southwestern College has many resources for people who are starting their own businesses. His talk covered the many local organizations that offer assistance with one-on-one counseling, business planning, market research assistance, profit-improvement strategies, and high-speed Internet access. Clark also covered the many organizations, federal, state and local, that provide various types of financial assistance.

Tom Studebaker’s talk covered the ethics of business and some simple and common-sense rules to improve your ability to get customers, close deals and expand your business.

Sally Ride Science Festival  
By Susy McKay

The Sally Ride Festival is coming up Saturday November 20. Dr. Sally Ride, America's first woman in space, invites fifth- through eighth-grade girls and interested adults to “Reach for the Stars” at the annual event held at the University of California, Irvine. Activities include a keynote speech by Sally Ride, a street fair, discovery workshops, and a drawing for prizes.

The Outreach Committee will be hosting a hands-on activity booth during the street fair. Last year’s volunteers found the experience very rewarding and were inspired by Sally Ride. If you are interested in volunteering, please e-mail outreach@awissd@yahoo.com.

To register, please visit the following website: http://www.sallyridefestivals.com/04uci1120/index.shtml

Strategy Session Explores the World of Work  
By Valerie Uzzell

On August 2, the AWIS Strategy Session Committee held a workshop for AWIS members on “Creating a more productive work environment.” Led by Strategy Session member Fran Putkey, participants considered the questions: why we work, how our personal values influence our ideal work environment, and how our current work environment stacks up against our goals and values. After much personal contemplation and discussion of these issues, we were asked to identify and discuss mismatches between our deeper values and the realities of our daily jobs. Each table then addressed several of these mismatches and brainstormed about how to improve our situations. For example, one AWIS member who valued “giving back to society” expressed frustration that basic research scientists so rarely get to observe the concrete benefits of their work. Her colleagues made several useful suggestions, including doing more tangible volunteer work as well as focusing on how her actions benefit people near at hand, such as her coworkers.

This Strategy Session encouraged us to consider the meaning of work in our lives and to use that understanding to search for solutions to our dissatisfactions at work. It also fostered a number of great conversations about our working lives, both the good parts and the bad, and helped us learn a great deal about our fellow AWIS members. For example, I was intrigued to learn that a large fraction of the workshop participants wanted to be scientists, doctors or engineers from a young age (as well as a few brave souls who wished to be ballerinas, explorers, astronauts or the president of the United States). It was great to see how many AWIS members had realized their childhood dreams. As for the future president of the United States, there’s still time!

AWIS-San Diego Wants to Meet the Press  
By Hima Joshi

Do your colleagues give you blank looks when you mention your involvement with AWIS? Do you wish more people knew about the help and support that AWIS provides? You are not alone. The consensus at the January Board members and Committee chairs Retreat was that AWIS should be a household name in the local scientific community. Every female scientist at every level should know about us. The Board members and Committee chairs decided that we could make this dream a reality by actively working on increasing our visibility. And hence the Public Relations Committee was born. Our mission: to get the press to cover AWIS-SD events.

AWIS-SD Board member Karin Lucas launched the PR Committee in April and turned over its leadership to Laura Waggoner in June. The Committee has created a list of contacts at local publications and news stations. Each Committee member is in charge of developing a relationship with a handful of these contacts. We are currently working on a press kit, which will contain general information and statistics about AWIS as well as news about our upcoming events. We will send press kits to our media contacts, and we are hoping to see members of the press at the upcoming AWIS-SD Open House. If you would like to know more about the PR Committee, contact Laura Waggoner (waggoner@biomail.ucsd.edu).

AWIS-San Diego Has a New Corporate Sponsorship Committee  
By Sumita Anant

Anna-Maria Hays, Karin Lucas and Sharon Wampler came up with an idea last summer to meet the financial needs of the ever-growing AWIS-SD Chapter, and the new Corporate Sponsorship Committee was born. The Committee aims to create a steady source of funds for AWIS activities throughout the year. In the past, fundraising
commissions associated with the Scholarship Gala or the Women In Bioscience (WIB) Conference met this need. As the number of AWIS-SD sponsored activities has grown in the past few years, “we thought that an on-going committee could better serve our chapter, rather than each year, [having] a separate committee attempt to re-invent the wheel of fundraising,” says Hays, past president of AWIS-SD and chair of this new committee.

Current Committee activities include approaching local biotech and pharmaceutical companies, banks, law firms and other organizations to raise funds. Typically, the Committee contacts companies with which AWIS members have close ties, either through an active member at the company or through a personal relationship with a Board member. The Committee sends a fundraising letter, an AWIS-SD brochure (describing the purpose and goals of AWIS-SD and recent AWIS-SD events) and a donation form to the contact. The generosity of these donors helps fund scholarships for undergraduate and graduate women studying science at local community colleges and universities. It also helps defray the costs of AWIS-SD activities, such as the professional development and science education workshops, science outreach activities for K-12 children, and mentoring programs for young women scientists.

In appreciation of their generosity, AWIS provides donor organizations with numerous benefits such as advertising opportunities at AWIS-SD events, job postings, e-mail blasts, website listings, joint scholarships and complimentary tickets for employees to the WIB conference and the Scholarship Gala.

Currently, around 80 percent of AWIS-SD’s funds come from donations, and the remaining money comes from membership dues. AWIS-SD strives to maintain the high quality of benefits provided to its members through free AWIS events, AWIS co-sponsored events, the Newsletter and networking and leadership opportunities. The funds for these activities will be met in a large part by the efforts of the Corporate Sponsorship Committee and by a slight increase in the AWIS-SD annual membership fee.

The Committee aims to raise $15,000 by December 2004. Hays foresees extensive collaboration with the newly formed Public Relations Committee, which will provide updated AWIS fact sheets and new contacts to the Corporate Sponsorship Committee. The long-term goal is to establish fruitful relations with local companies 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.

As an AWIS-SD member, you can help by contacting the Corporate Sponsorship Committee (haysamiam@yahoo.com) to see if your company can sponsor AWIS-SD.

### Science Writing Course Offered Through UCSD Extension

A nine-session course in science writing is being offered this fall through UCSD Extension. The course begins on October 12. Taught by AWIS member, communications consultant, and freelance science writer Lynne Friedmann, the course provides 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. For more information on the course, visit [http://www.extension.ucsd.edu/Schedule/index.cfm?y/Course=WCW P-40105](http://www.extension.ucsd.edu/Schedule/index.cfm?y/Course=WCW P-40105) or contact Lynne Friedmann at lfriedmann@nasw.org.

### Get Informed and Vote!

By Cindy Atwell

Voting is your right and your responsibility. It is your right because you are a citizen of the United States, but why is it your responsibility? Budget cuts, the economy, the deficit, the war in Iraq, and countless other factors have had a direct impact on our families, our friends, and on us. As we have found out in recent years, these problems are not mere abstractions nor are they someone else’s problem. But what can you do about these things? Empower yourself by voting and influence the decisions that have consequences for us all. In the upcoming presidential election, women could have an enormous impact on the future of this country.

“Single women could decide the election in November—if they vote at the same rate as married women.” —Boston Globe August 4, 2004

Great! You are ready to vote! Hold on a minute! It is essential to become informed before casting that ballot! Read the newspapers, watch the news, or go to the websites of political organizations. For example, the League of Women Voters has a plethora of information on voting and the issues. You can also search the candidates’ websites for their views on the issues important to you.

Eighty-four years ago women won the right to vote in this country. Don’t throw away what they fought for. The registration deadline for the upcoming presidential election is October 18, 2004 (California). You can begin the registration process online at [www.ss.ca.gov](http://www.ss.ca.gov) by clicking on the Elections & Voter Information tab.

### New Website Surveys Biotech Programs at San Diego Colleges and Universities

By Sandra Slivka and Karen Click

The field of biotechnology is constantly changing, which is why those with successful careers keep up with the latest technology, learn new skills, and adapt to new job challenges. Fortunately, San Diego is home to premier colleges and universities, all of which offer a multitude of biotechnology courses and degree programs. And now there is a one-stop, easy way to research the many biotechnology education programs available at colleges and universities in the San Diego region.

Please visit [www.sdbiotechcareers.org](http://www.sdbiotechcareers.org) to find up-to-date information about:

- Undergraduate and graduate degree programs.
- Continuing education training in biotech business management, drug discovery, clinical research, regulatory affairs, manufacturing, and more.
- Community college biotechnology certificate courses.
- Biotechnology career resources.
- Biotechnology internships (post your internship or find an internship on the on-line bulletin).

The new website is a project of the San Diego Biotechnology Education Consortium (SDBEC). The SDBEC was formed with the goal of providing better education and training for the San Diego biotechnology workforce. The SDBEC supports increased collaboration and articulation among member educational programs, assesses and addresses industry needs, and facilitates placement of interns within the industry. Members of the SDBEC include the...
Community Colleges of San Diego County, San Diego State University, California State University, San Marcos, the University of California, San Diego, the University of San Diego, UCSD Extension, SDSU College of Extended Studies, CSUSM Extended Studies, USD Continuing Education, the Southern California Biotechnology Center, and BIOCOM. More information about the SDBEC can be found by going to www.sdbiotechcareers.org.

California Women’s Law Center
By Karin Lucas

On Tuesday March 23, I attended a luncheon put on by the California Women’s Law Center (CWLC). The CWLC is a statewide non-profit organization that acts as a resource for women in California. The representatives gave a presentation on the focus of their group and their latest battles. One example was their fight to get a girls’ softball field for a southern California high school that had just built a brand new stadium for the boys’ team and left the old, bedraggled field for the girls. The goal was not just to get a field, but also to push for the enforcement of Title IX, which guarantees equal funding for women’s and men’s sports programs.

CWLC also organized a “feed-in” where hundreds of women descended on a shopping mall to breast-feed their children. All women in California have the legal right to breast-feed in public, but because many people are not aware of this fact, women are often asked to leave or to use a restroom to breast-feed. The “feed-in” was a publicized media event meant to increase awareness of this right.

The nearest CWLC office is in Los Angeles. There are no immediate plans to open a San Diego office, but CWLC services are available to any woman in San Diego. To learn more about this organization, please visit their website (www.cwlc.org).

DEPARTMENTS
Your Two Cents
Compiled by Hima Joshi

Question from last time:
What is your favorite TV show and why?

Responses:

“The Simpsons.” Watching the antics of Homer, Marge, Bart, Maggie and Lisa is a great way to relax at the end of the day. :) And I love what a devoted nerd Lisa is. My hero!
- Karin Lucas

I have favorite TV channels: Food TV and Newsworld International. Everything on Food TV looks yummy except the low-carb programs. Newsworld International presents the news from multiple points of view. I especially like foreign/special assignment, a weekly special with a focus on a particular country in the world. The program usually focuses on the economic and political events that shape a nation. Its scope extends past North America, Western Europe and the Middle East to include South America, Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and isolated island nations. I also love watching “Seinfeld” and “Friends” reruns, “America’s Top 10, 100…anything,” and Animal Planet’s “Pet Videos.”
- Sumita Anant

“The Daily Show” with Jon Stewart. It’s smart, funny, and a great stress reliever when following politics.
- Kerri Zawadzki

My favorite TV show, currently, is “The Daily Show” with Jon Stewart, on Comedy Central. I can get a quick distillation of what the major networks are broadcasting as the news for the day or week, and at the same time be watching something that is a bit silly and relaxing. I feel like I am “multi-tasking” on my TV watching because I get some idea of the news and something comedic at the same time.
- Margaret Dunbar

Hmmm, I guess it will have to be “Law and Order.” You have to love those deviants!
- Laura Waggoner

Questions for next time:

Have you ever made a drastic career change? If so, how did you know that it was the right thing to do?

We would like to publish your responses to these questions 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 Movie Review for June:
“Spellbound”
Reviewed by Barbara Armstrong

On June 3, the AWIS Book and Movie Club viewed “Spellbound,” a documentary about eight teenagers who competed in the 1999 national spelling bee.

The documentary was very engaging and suspenseful. The filmmakersprofiled the everyday lives of the contestants and the effort each contestant undertook to succeed in the national spelling contest. One contestant, the child of immigrants from Mexico, lived in a poor rural area, and one lived in an economically depressed urban area. Another contestant, a child of immigrants from India, lived a more privileged life in the suburbs of California, and another lived on the East Coast and had riding lessons and a live-in au pair. A couple of the contestants lived in single-parent families. Although they came from different parts of the country, and were of different economic classes, their drive to succeed in the national spelling bee united them.

Their preparation for the contest also differed, breaking along economic lines. Those of more privileged means had spelling and language coaches, and those who were much less economically advantaged studied on their own. Despite these differences, all were equally prepared to compete in the national contest. This aspect of the film, generally “what it takes to compete,” was of particular interest to the Book and Movie Club members who viewed the film. It brought back memories of similar challenges and the influence of the family culture that was depicted in the film.

Another subject covered by the film was the question “What does it take to be successful in America?” The father of one of the contestants, an immigrant from India, says in the film, “America is the land of opportunity…and, through hard work, anyone can make it here.” They live comfortably in suburban California and, we learn in the film, are building another large home. The father organizes a...
This book will be most appealing to people interested in psychology, education, the human experience (particularly college and coming of age), and current social issues. “A Hope in the Unseen” reads like a novel but provides food for thought. While I am the book’s biggest champion (I think it is extraordinary), the group enjoyed the book on the whole. We gave it an average rating of 3.9 using our new ratings system:

- 5 stars: in the top 10% of books you’ve read
- 4 stars: in the top 25%
- 3 stars: in the top 50%
- 2 stars: in the bottom 25%
- 1 star: in the bottom 10%

AWIS- San Diego Chapter Welcomes New Members
By Emily Leong

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helen E. Barnes</td>
<td>UCSD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon L. Cohan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynne Dickson</td>
<td>Amgen, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingrid L. Dodge</td>
<td>Johnson &amp; Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine Eng</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Amanda L. Lewis</td>
<td>UCSD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susy L. McKay</td>
<td>UCSD</td>
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<td>Connie Moore</td>
<td>CDM</td>
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<td>Kathryn A. Nguyen</td>
<td>UCSD</td>
</tr>
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<td>Jennifer L. Nielsen</td>
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<td>Lisa H. Olshansky</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Elizabeth Pereira</td>
<td>Catalyst Law Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leonor Rovai</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roxanne Ruzic</td>
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<td>Angela Michelle Scott</td>
<td>UCSD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy D. Sears</td>
<td>UCSD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stacey L. Sette</td>
<td>Nu-Kote International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura M. Sosa</td>
<td>California Western School of Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula Stigler</td>
<td>UCSD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia-Christina Wasilke</td>
<td>UCSD</td>
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<td>Lan C. Wiborg</td>
<td>City of San Diego</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

AWIS Member News

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 Barbara Armstrong at baawis@nethere.com, and write “AWIS member news” in the subject heading.

Dr. Sonya Summerour Clemmons will run for the position of Councilor on the AWIS National Board. The Councilors are the voting representatives of the membership on the National Board. The councilors participate in AWIS committees, help with policy decisions for the organization, and reach out to members and chapters. There are only four councilors serving on the Board. Each councilor serves for a three-year term. As the largest and most active AWIS chapter, it is important that we have a representative on the AWIS Board. Your vote for Dr. Clemmons will ensure that the AWIS-SD membership will be well represented in AWIS policy decisions.

Denise Hickey, J.D. has joined Quidel Corporation as their Director of Intellectual Property.
Dr. Teresa Larsen has been awarded Norwood University’s Alend B. Dow Creativity Center Fellowship. Dr. Larsen will use this award to research, write, and compose figures for a “style manual to guide scientists in the creation of accurate, informative and esthetically pleasing visualizations of their data. The book will offer guidance for any type of data visualization from simple graphs to complicated 3-D images.” The textbook will be used for her SDSU course “Scientific Visualization & Communication,” a mandatory core course for graduate students in the Computational Science Program. It is Dr. Larsen’s objective, with the textbook, educational course, and her organization, The Foundation for Scientific Literacy, to make science accessible to everyone.

Dr. Elaine Weidenhammer has been awarded a scholarship to the FlexMBA program at the Rady School of Management at UCSD. Dr. Weidenhammer is pursuing this degree “to get a better understanding of some aspects of business that are not covered in graduate programs for technical degrees.” As the associate director of business development at Nanogen, Weidenhammer has successfully transitioned from the bench to a business position. Her Ph.D. makes her a technical expert amongst her business peers, and she feels that an MBA will lend credibility on matters of business and facilitate her growth into executive positions within technology-focused companies. For more information about the scholarship, please visit: http://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/newsrel/general/GC_ATHERA_Scholarship.p.asp.

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**Subscribe to the Free AWIS E-mail List**

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. Include your full name, address, and phone number.

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**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.

September/October Newsletter staff:

- Janice Payne
- Hima Joshi
- Shermali Gunawardena
- Julie Kinyoun
- Siobhan Malany
- Barbara Armstrong
- Sumita Anant
- Tobey Tam
- Alice Budai

Send news items and comments to Barbara Armstrong via e-mail: baawis@nethere.com; or AWIS, PO Box 178096, San Diego, CA 92177-8096. If you would like your article to be included in the next issue, please submit it by October 1, 2004.

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**Moving? Address Change?**

Please notify us of your new address so you won't miss our mailings! Please log onto our new membership update page http://awis.npaci.edu/html/login.html using your AWIS-San Diego username and password. If you have not yet received a username and password, or have misplaced them, please e-mail sdawis@san.rr.com. If necessary, you can also mail your updated information to: AWIS - San Diego, PO Box 178096, 92177-8096.

To post jobs in the AWIS Newsletter, contact Natalie Schiller at nschill@cox.net, or AWIS PO Box: 178096, San Diego, CA 92177-8096 for details. Deadline for inclusion in the next AWIS Newsletter is October 1, 2004. If submitting by snail mail, include the words "ATTN: Natalie Schiller" on the bottom left corner of the envelope.