

## Upcoming events:

PA-AWIS chapter meetings:

**29 Jan 2009**

Speaker: Julie Yu, PhD

Topic: Explorations in Science

**25 Feb 2009**

Speaker: Fitnat Yildiz, PhD

Topic: Biofilms

Location: Palo Alto

**28 Feb 2009**

NCC-AWIS Winter Workshop with Peggy Klaus

Location: Oakland

Winter 2008



PA-AWIS Newsletter



ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE  
PALO ALTO CHAPTER  
WWW.PA-AWIS.ORG  
P.O. BOX 2641, SO. SAN FRANCISCO  
CA 94083-2461

## President's Note

AWIS volunteers would like to wish all our supporters Happy Holidays and best wishes for 2009. We thank all of our members and non-members for supporting the AWIS activities throughout 2008 and we hope to see everyone in the coming year.

2008 was full of exciting programs and networking events. Our December networking event was well-received by all of the attendees and we have been asked to organize more of these events for our attendees. Also during the past few months, we have been selling raffle tickets and the winner was announced at our December meeting. All proceeds from the raffle will go towards our scholarship for local community college students to be given during our annual banquet around April 2009. We plan to continue raffle sales during our Jan-March 2009 meetings in order to raise enough money to cover our scholarships. We do hope that we get your whole-hearted support for this cause.

For 2009, we have a number of exciting programs and events planned. The NCC-AWIS is planning a workshop in February and the details are enclosed in this newsletter. During 2009, we will be holding our yearly elections for the board positions. If you or anyone you know is interested in becoming a member of the AWIS-Palo Alto family, then do let us know.

The AWIS-Palo Alto volunteers and board members look forward to seeing most of you at our coming events during the year 2009.

Thank you and I look forward to meeting you and your friends at future AWIS meetings.

Regards,

**Neesha Suverna**

AWIS Palo Alto President

## Reasons to Join AWIS Palo Alto

As an AWIS member you can:

\* **Network!** Receive support from other women in science in several ways:

- 1- online through [awis.org](http://awis.org) (search for contacts by discipline, geographic area, or employment sector)
- 2- online in our LinkedIn group only for members
- 3- in person at our monthly meetings
- 4- at our fun fall picnic -- free admission for members and their families

\* Attend our monthly chapter meetings for a discounted rate

\* Connect with an online mentor free through [Mentornet.net](http://Mentornet.net), a convenient matching service founded by one of our own chapter members

\* Problem-solve with others who have been where you are now

\* Develop leadership skills to advance your career. You must be a member to be on the board and to borrow career books from our dedicated library.

\* Project a voice with impact on national issues like science education

\* Promote opportunities for women in science

\* Exercise your commitment to foster the next generation of women in science

\* Recognize and hear from distinguished women in science

AWIS Palo Alto is a local nonprofit organization affiliated with National Association for Women in Science and AAAS. Your membership supports our committee work (Scholarship, Outreach, Mentoring, Newsletter) and our programs (chapter meetings, awards banquet, workshops, etc.).

Our goal is to double the number of members this year. To join, please see <http://www.awis.org/about/join.html>. For more information, please visit our chapter website at [www.pa-awis.org](http://www.pa-awis.org), or email [awis.pa@gmail.com](mailto:awis.pa@gmail.com).

**Let AWIS be “a network, a resource, a voice” for you!**

## And the Winner is...

by Susan Bernhard

If you attended the summer picnic or any of the 2008 Fall chapter meetings, then you've heard about the new fundraising strategy for supporting our Chapter Scholarships: Raffle Baskets! We sell tickets for 3-4 months at meetings and then draw the grand prize winner. You do not need to be present to win.

On December 8<sup>th</sup> at the Networking Social a winner was chosen for the fabulous "Curl-Up-With-A-Book" Basket valued at over \$200. Nilou Arden was our lucky winner this time. Next time it could be YOU! The Book Basket contained donated books, a bookstore gift certificate, a fleece throw, bookmarks, tea, cookies, chocolate, popcorn and more.

On January 29<sup>th</sup> we'll start selling tickets for a "Spring Garden" Basket at our next meeting at PARC. Hope to see you there buying lots of tickets and chances to win! Tickets cost only one dollar, and each one helps support two named \$1000 Memorial Scholarships that will be presented to local Community College students at the 2009 NCC Awards and Recognition Banquet in late April or early May. So far over \$400 has been raised towards our \$2000 goal.

Thanks Everyone!

## Mentoring – November Meeting On Career Roundtables

by Lucia Mokres, Co-Chair, Mentoring 2008-09

The second fall Mentoring meeting was held on November 18<sup>th</sup> at Stanford. The meeting was well attended, with a full capacity crowd of enthusiastic graduate students, postdocs, and mentors. After supper, we split up into small groups with 1-2 mentors at each table hosting a career-related discussion. Groups formed by self-selection and we switched tables after 15 minutes. The roundtable format was warmly received and there were numerous positive comments from participants. Topics included:

Job-seeking tips: Resume and Networking Skills

Leadership skills: Tips on How to Manage a Lab, Dept, Associates

Time Management

Work-Life Balance

Deciding Between Academia and Industry

Industry careers (including BioSci Research, Clinical Development, Chemistry Research, Project Management, etc.)

2-Body Problem

International – Living and Working Abroad

Academic careers (Advice for New Faculty, Choosing a Postdoc, Academic Job Searches, etc)

We held a book door-prize drawing and picked 7 lucky winners. Mentor/protegee matches were announced, and attendees received contact information for their mentoring partner. We are still seeking additional mentors in all areas of science and with a diverse array of life experiences. Mentoring requires minimal time commitment, and is highly rewarding for both mentors and protegees alike. If you are interested, please contact the Mentoring Chairs at [mentoring\\_awis@yahoo.com](mailto:mentoring_awis@yahoo.com). The next mentoring meeting will be held on January 20<sup>th</sup>.

## Call for Nominations for 2009 Awards

by Staff Correspondant

Has a woman scientist ever helped your career? Please take a minute and nominate her for a mentoring award today!

AWIS needs your help to find all the inspiring mentors out there! Most professional assistance is done one-on-one. Your quick nomination will allow AWIS to publicly recognize the importance of such mentoring.

Each year at an elegant formal banquet, NCC-AWIS and all the local AWIS Chapters give awards to honor and celebrate outstanding women in three professional categories. Two awards go to women **working in research or technology** in academia or industry: 1) the Judith Pool award, to a woman established in her field; 2) the Ellen Weaver award, to a woman earlier in her career; and 3) the Distinguished Professional award, goes to a woman **using her science away from the bench**.

Exceptional service to women in science may be to the scientific community through professional societies or schools, or to individual women directly through mentoring and facilitating career development. **The nominees need not be AWIS members.**

### The nomination process is simple.

We need a letter of nomination explaining how the nominee has helped other women develop professionally.

To make a nomination, just fold and mail the attached nomination form.

Alternatively, email your response to the questions pasted on the bottom of this message to Mary Alice Yund at [nominations@nccawis.org](mailto:nominations@nccawis.org) (enter .NCCAWIS award nomination. as Subject text).

*Nominations must be received by February 1, 2009.*

THANK YOU for taking the time to recognize a mentor!

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**Nomination form for NCC-AWIS Awards (send nominations to Mary Alice Yund at [nominations@nccawis.org](mailto:nominations@nccawis.org))**

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**My Email/Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominee Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mentor's contribution to women scientists (and how you know her):**

**Her title or position(s) held** (can be verified later):

**Her current position:**

**Circle one:**    bench    not at bench

**Circle one:**    junior    senior

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## **Mentoring Meeting will be on January 20<sup>th</sup>**

*by Susan Bernhard and Jenny Saltzman, co-Chairs Mentoring, 2008-09*

Sue Desmond-Hellman will be the featured speaker for our Winter Mentoring Meeting on January 20th in Mitchell Bldg at Stanford. Susan Desmond-Hellmann, M.D., M.P.H., is President of Product Development at Genentech where she is responsible for process research and development, business development, product portfolio management, alliance management and pipeline planning support functions. Sue is

board-certified in Internal Medicine and Medical Oncology and she is a member of Genentech's executive committee. Recently she was chosen to receive the 2009 Edison Innovation Award, which will be presented at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual 'Invent Your Future' Bay Area Conference for Women in April.

On January 20th Dr Desmond-Hellman will speak about the 'Benefits of Mentoring' throughout one's career. She will share some of her experience, as well as advice on seeking, giving and receiving mentoring. Sue's talk will interest both mentors and their protégées. Longtime AWIS mentor, Dr Lesley Murray, who is a scientist at Genentech and the former AWIS Scholarship Chair, helped nominate and invite Dr Desmond-Hellman as our speaker. (Thank you, Lesley!)

AWIS Palo Alto members in good standing are welcome to attend mentoring meetings, but seating is limited and preference will be given to protégées and mentors in the program. If you'd like to attend, please rsvp to mentoring\_awis@yahoo.com on or before Jan 16th.

PS. We still need mentors. If you are willing to share your experience please send us an email and we'll send you the form to sign-up. Thanks!



## **October Meeting Highlights**

*by Carolyn Schmitzeh*

**Topic: Delivering Drugs Needle-free using Iontophoresis**

**Speaker: Kathy Farinas, Ph.D.**

Dr. Kathleen Farinas formerly of Alza Corporation gave a fascinating talk at our October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 AWIS meeting of the Palo Alto Chapter. She spoke about the challenges of developing devices to deliver drugs to patients. Specifically she talked about E-trans, developed by Alza, which uses an electric current to deliver charged therapeutic molecules.

The first part of her talk was about Ionsys, a needle-free, patient controlled transdermal system used to treat post-operative pain. The drug delivery system is a device placed on the skin that drives a current to administer the drug, fentanyl. The device is completely self-contained and allows the patient to control the amount and timing of dosing. This transdermal delivery allows for better modulation than oral dosing and more patient mobility than intravenous dosing. Unfortunately, the challenges of using a gel matrix based drug and electric current proved to be problematic and the product was recently recalled due to the device self-activating on the shelf. Hopefully these problems will be ironed out!

The second part of Dr. Farinas' talk concerned eye diseases and the problems of treating the macular area at the back of the eye. She discussed several therapies among them the use of iontophoresis. Two nodes, cathode and anode, would be placed on the front part of the eye administering a dose of the required medicine. This would be a vast improvement over the current therapy of monthly injections directly into the eye. The market for this type of therapy is huge with a projection of over 50 million people having some type of eye disease by 2020.

Kathy's talk was an exciting glimpse into device research and power of merging engineering, product design, and biology.

## **November Meeting Highlights**

*by Lakshmi Jakkula*

**Topic: PCR\* for the Common Man: The Evolution of Molecular Diagnostics**

**Speaker: Emily S. Winn-Deen, Ph.D.**

**Vice President, Genetics and Oncology R&D, Cepheid (\*Polymerase chain reaction)**



## December Networking Meeting Highlights

by Marcy Auerbach

Dr. Winn-Deen came to Cepheid from Roche Molecular Systems in Pleasanton, CA where she led several major efforts for various diagnostic products. Dr. Deen discussed how she translated her expertise in integrating science and technology in diagnostics for the fully integrated PCR based systems that Cepheid brought into the markets for various diagnostic assays.

She discussed two important components that Cepheid is focusing in Diagnostics. The instrumentation component and the assay component. She explained Cepheid's GeneXpert system that fully integrates the sample prep, amplification and detection, all in one. Cepheid's easy-to-use systems integrate a number of complicated and time-intensive steps, including sample preparation, DNA amplification and detection, which enable the analysis of complex biological samples in its proprietary test cartridges.

She described various in vitro diagnostic tests (IVDs) for health care acquired infections, HIV tests and new oncology CML, and ABL assays. Another component to their research is Analyte Specific Reagent program which comprised of a series of easy-to-use primer set or probe in a convenient lyophilized bead format. The new Biothreat tests that Cepheid is developing for certain organisms that may be used in Bioterrorism are very interesting. The most accurate means of detecting these organisms is through identifying their unique DNA. Dr. Winn-Deen showed how sensitive some of the Cepheid tests are in discriminating the highly harmful species thru amplification and sequencing. Dr. Deen showed the schematics and explained the the real time PCR technology that even a non-scientists could understand and appreciate one of the great 21st centuries innovations: the PCR. This very enlightening talk showed how important and urgent some of these diagnostic tests are how much useful to bring these tests in a compact and integrated format that Cepheid is bringing out, that could be useful in both advanced countries as well as in the developing countries.

The December Networking meeting was an enjoyable, productive evening of developing elevator pitches. Whether you are currently looking for a job or happily working, everyone could use some practice talking about themselves and having a pitch on deck. Program co-chair Ashley Fouts gave a brief introduction to how to give an elevator pitch and how you might tailor it for different audiences. The elevator pitch is designed to introduce you to another person in such a way that piques their interest so they say, "tell me more". Many interactions or even interviews start with a question like "tell me about yourself". The interviewer does not want you to go back to grade school and talk about your childhood. This is a specific question with a specific answer... in 30 sec to a minute, they want to get you to relax and loosen out your vocal cords, understand your background, your accomplishment, your skills, and how you use them in your current job or how you would use them in a different job and what your future goals are. As exemplified by Ashley's personal example, the keys to the pitch are brevity, tailoring it to the audience, saying positive things, and creating an opening for follow-up. A member from the audience also suggested including a hook. Something unique about yourself or your work that had them remember you.

The crowd of nearly sixty attendees included hardened veterans as well as novices trying out their first pitch. In groups of 8, people gave and received useful feedback to hone their skills and also make new contacts. The handful of recruiters from scientific staffing companies were a valuable resource and freely shared their perspectives on what they like to hear. They mostly have a solid scientific background and understand the science involved in the positions they're looking to fill. So, when talking to one of them you should likely talk about specific scientific skills that make you a good candidate for a given position.

The winner of the raffle basket to benefit the Palo Alto AWIS chapter named scholarships was chosen. These scholarships are awarded annually at the Northern California banquet in April to three women in science who are currently attending a community college. Over \$450 was raised toward the scholarships and an enormous basket stuffed with reading related goodies went to Nilou Arden—Congratulations Nilou! Look for our gardening related basket in the spring!





## **AWIS-Palo Alto Wants YOU: Annual Board Elections**

AWIS Palo Alto is looking for new volunteer officers. Any member in good standing can be nominated and may run for office in the annual elections. Being on the Board is a great way to meet people and translate your ideas into actions that really motivate and inspire other women in science. Anyone who is interested should contact Neesha Suvarna before the Board meeting (to be held in early February), and submit a brief bio with statement about which office she'd like to run for and why.

*The board positions open for elections include: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Member-At-Large.*

**AWIS thanks our  
corporate sponsors:**

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## Explorations in Science

Speaker: **Julie Yu, Ph.D.**  
staff scientist at the Exploratorium Teacher Institute



Do you remember what sparked your interest in science? Why you love it? Join us for an energizing presentation by Dr. Julie Yu, staff scientist at the Exploratorium Teacher Institute in San Francisco. Dr. Yu will tell us how she is spreading the love of science by creating interactive explorations for museum visitors **and** helping teachers teach science the way many of us learned to love it – by doing and experimenting with our own hands. Inspiring public interest and understanding in science through all avenues is especially important to combat the current anti-science rhetoric and poor funding for classrooms. So, re-discover the fun and share the excitement with us!

After receiving her B.S. in chemical engineering from Brown University, Dr. Yu taught middle school math and science in East Palo Alto and then K-12 science at the Tech Museum in San Jose. Teaching science reminded her of how much she liked learning science, so she went back to school and earned a PhD in chemical engineering with a minor in molecular and cell biology from UC, Berkeley. With a NSF Discovery Corps Fellowship, she did a postdoc at the Exploratorium Teaching Institute and has stayed on as a staff scientist. Her extracurricular activities are focused on her favorite synthesis of chemistry and biology - cooking and eating.

<b>DATE:</b>	<b>Thursday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009</b>
<b>LOCATION:</b>	<b>PARC Auditorium 3333 Coyote Hill Road, Palo Alto</b>
<b>RSVP:</b>	online <a href="http://www.acteva.com/go/pa-awis">http://www.acteva.com/go/pa-awis</a>

### Schedule

7:00-7:30 pm	Networking and light supper
7:30-7:45 pm	Announcements
7:45-8:45 pm	Program
8:45-9:00 pm	Discussion

**Welcome!! You don't need to be a member to attend.**  
**All scientists, students, and their friends are welcome. Men too!**  
**Members pay \$4 and non-members pay \$7 to offset the cost of food.**

### Directions from 280:

Take Hwy 280 and exit at Page Mill Rd and go East towards Palo Alto (if coming from the South, turn right, if coming from the north, turn left onto Page Mill. Turn RIGHT onto Coyote Hill Rd. Turn LEFT into PARC (formerly Xerox PARC). Follow signs to the Auditorium on your left at end of parking area, down flight of outdoor stairs.

**Directions from Stanford:** Take Foothill SOUTH towards Los Altos. Turn RIGHT on Hill view and PARC is 2<sup>nd</sup> driveway on the right. Park and follow signs to the Auditorium (walk uphill through parking lot then down a flight of outdoor stairs).

See also [www.tinyurl.com/PARC-Auditorium](http://www.tinyurl.com/PARC-Auditorium) for map/directions.  
For more info: [www.pa-awis.org](http://www.pa-awis.org), or email [awis.pa@gmail.com](mailto:awis.pa@gmail.com)



## Biofilms: Understanding their role in disease and public health

**Fitnat Yildiz, Ph.D.**  
**Associate Professor of**  
**Microbiology and Environmental Toxicology**  
**UC Santa Cruz**

The Yildiz Lab investigates molecular mechanisms of biofilm formation using *Vibrio cholerae*, the causative agent of the disease cholera, as a model system. Biofilms are surface attached microbial communities that promote the growth, survival and persistence of human pathogens like *V. cholerae* in aquatic ecosystems. Understanding *V. cholerae* biofilms provides a path for developing novel treatments and prevention strategies. This topic touches on host-pathogen interaction, infectious disease, public health, as well as molecular biology and carbohydrate chemistry.

Fitnat Yildiz did a postdoctoral fellowship in Dr. Gary Schoolnik's Lab at Stanford and joined the faculty at UC Santa Cruz in 2002. Since joining, she has established a productive research lab, and found a balance of work-and-life that many members may want to hear more about. Please join us for a fascinating talk with this guest speaker.

<b>DATE:</b>	<b>Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009</b>
<b>LOCATION:</b>	<b>PARC Auditorium</b> <b>3333 Coyote Hill Road, Palo Alto</b>
<b>RSVP:</b>	online <a href="http://www.acteva.com/go/pa-awis">http://www.acteva.com/go/pa-awis</a>

### Schedule

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 For more info: [www.pa-awis.org](http://www.pa-awis.org), or email [awis.pa@gmail.com](mailto:awis.pa@gmail.com)



You may have seen Peggy Klaus on *Nightline*, the *Today Show*, and *20/20* or read her advice in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Fortune*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, *BusinessWeek*, and *O* magazine. Author of *BRAG! The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn Without Blowing It* and *The Hard Truth About Soft Skills: Workplace Lessons Smart People Wish They'd Learned Sooner*, she reaches thousands each year through her workshops, keynote speeches, and executive coaching at leading corporations and organizations worldwide, including Fortune 500 firms such as JP Morgan Chase, Pacific Gas & Electric Company, Booz Allen Hamilton, The National Football League, and Computer Associates, among others. Klaus has also served as a lecturer at Harvard; the University of California, Berkeley; and the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. She is based in Berkeley, CA.

## **NCC-AWIS Winter Workshop 2009: BRAG! The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn Without Blowing It ! with Peggy Klaus**

Have you ever berated yourself for missing a golden opportunity to talk about yourself and your accomplishments because you were fearful of coming off as too showy or self-serving? Learn the art of tooting your own horn without blowing it so you can communicate your strengths and accomplishments without appearing too opportunistic, eager, egotistical, or self-aggrandizing. For most of us, brag is a four-letter word and self-promotion is about as comfortable as having a root canal. Find out how to overcome your reservations about bragging so you can comfortably sell yourself wherever you go—without feeling or sounding like a walking billboard.

<b>DATE:</b>	<b>Saturday, February 28th, 2009</b>
	8.30-9:00 Registration and Continental Breakfast
	9.00-12:00 Workshop
	12:00-2:00 Lunch and Networking
<b>LOCATION:</b>	<b>Rothwell Center Faculty-Staff Dining Room Mills College, 5000 MacArthur Blvd. Oakland, CA. 94613</b>
<b>DIRECTIONS:</b>	<a href="http://www.mills.edu/maps/index.php">http://www.mills.edu/maps/index.php</a>
<b>COST:</b>	<b>AWIS Members - \$30, Non-members - \$45, Students and Postdocs - \$25. Onsite registration add \$5 and BYO lunch.</b>
<b>RSVP:</b>	<b>No later than Feb, 24<sup>th</sup> online at: <a href="http://www.acteva.com/booking.cfm?bevaid=174433">http://www.acteva.com/booking.cfm?bevaid=174433</a></b>

## AWIS Palo Alto Board Members, 2008-2009

President	Neesha Suvarna	sneesha@hotmail.com
Vice-President	Rachel Harte	harterac@yahoo.com
Secretary	Shibing Wang	shibingw@stanford.edu
Treasurer	Chitra Chakravarthy	chitra.chakravarthy@gmail.com
Member-at-large	Martina Blank	mblank@stanford.edu
Mentoring committee chairs	Susan Bernhard Jennifer Saltzman	sbawis@yahoo.com saltzmas@stanford.edu mentoring_awis@yahoo.com
Co-Chair Membership	Pinal Kanabar Leslie Meltzer	pkanabar@gmail.com lachelle@gmail.com
Co-Chair Programs	Ashley Fouts Lakshmi Jakkula	ashley_fouts@hotmail.com lakshmi_jakkula@comcast.net
Community Outreach chairs	Katy Kuo Korsmeyer	kuokaty@scientist.com
Industry Outreach Chair	Viji Mahathevan	viji.mahathevan@yahoo.com
NCC-AWIS representative	Viji Mahathevan	viji.mahathevan@yahoo.com
Scholarship committee chair	Josephine Salcedo	jsalcedo103@hotmail.com
Newsletter editor Co-Editor	Sudha Khurana Josephine Salcedo	pa_awis.editor@yahoo.com
Webmistress	Monique Anderson	pa_awis.webmistress@yahoo.com

**Chapter dues \$25 - Student/unemployed \$10 - Membership in national AWIS is required**

**Pick up an application at a chapter meeting or visit [www.awis.org](http://www.awis.org)**



