



## Check out the news from AWIS National!

*An excerpt from AWIS National website [www.awis.org](http://www.awis.org)*

### **AWIS Announces Spring Tele-Seminar Series**

In May, the AWIS Coaching Program will offer a series of tele-seminars to help manage your career effectively.

Upcoming seminars include:

- When Everyone is Looking: How To Be More Effective in the Current "Crowded" Marketplace, 5/7, 7 PM Eastern
- Effective Communication in a Four Generation Workplace, 5/14, 11 AM Eastern
- Impression Management for Interviews, 5/21, Noon Eastern and 7 PM Eastern
- How to Keep Your Job in a Tough Economic Climate, 5/28, Noon Eastern

For more information go to [www.awiscoaching.org](http://www.awiscoaching.org)  
Price \$14.95 AWIS Members (\$24.95 Non-Members)

## Upcoming Event for the LA/Ventura County Chapter of AWIS

*Come join us at the Caltech Campus for a shared panel event with the Caltech Postdoctoral Association to hear from science writers and journalists about their career paths and gain advice if you're considering a career in writing. For more information on the distinguished panel see page 4.*

### **Science Writing and Journalism Panel Event**

Panel Members:

Greg Crister  
Dave Xobel  
Jorge Cham

When: Thursday, May 14th  
7- 8:30 pm

Where: Baxter Hall  
Caltech

Cost: FREE

***Networking social with light refreshments 6-7pm.  
Baxter Lobby. Please join us and network with  
fellow AWIS members***

Please note: you do not need to be a current AWIS member to attend this networking event! Please feel free to invite colleagues who might be interested in such an event.♦

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## AWIS Member Spotlight



**AWIS Member *Dr. Alice Huang* shares a bit about herself and her perspective on AWIS**

Dr Alice S. Huang is a senior faculty associate in biology at the California Institute of Technology, where she was also a senior councilor for external relations. She is a distinguished virologist and lifelong advocate for women in science. In February of 2009 she has been chosen to serve as president-elect of AAAS. She has also served as president of the American Society for Microbiology and dean for science at New York University. A member of several scientific advisory boards, Huang has also consulted on science policy for government agencies in Singapore, Taiwan, and China.

Born in China, she grew up in the United States attending St. Mary's Hall, Burlington, NJ, the National Cathedral School, Washington, DC, and Wellesley College. She received B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees from Johns Hopkins University. As a graduate student she was the first to purify and characterize defective interfering (DI) viral particles.

*"Get involved in what you truly enjoy, and commit to doing it as best as you can." Dr. Alice S. Huang's advice to young women starting out today is exemplified by her own extraordinary career. "Ever since I was about seven years old, I've always wanted to be a physician. I think this is because of my father, who was a bishop of the Anglican Episcopal Church in China, had often mused to himself that he would perhaps prefer to save bodies rather than to save souls. When I got into medical school, I realized that saving bodies and preventing people from dying was only one aspect of medicine, and that there was so much more to it. And I discovered that I loved doing research."*

As an administrator Dr. Huang is particularly interested in education, in career mentoring, and in policy issues related to science and technology. Since coming to Caltech, Dr. Huang has joined the Pasadena League of Women Voters, the Board of the Keck Graduate Institute of Applied Life Sciences, and the Pacific Council on International Policy.♦

### Membership

If you are interested in joining the national AWIS organization or the LA/Ventura Chapter you can join online at: [www.awis.org](http://www.awis.org).

Dues are \$65 for AWIS Nat'l and \$20 for the LA/Ventura chapter. Student dues for the local chapter have been *reduced to* \$10. Please be sure to indicate which local chapter you are joining as a percentage of the national dues will be awarded to the chapter. ♦

### AWIS Member Spotlight

The AWIS Member Spotlight will be a recurring feature in our quarterly newsletter. Future Spotlights will feature national AWIS Chapter Members:

***Sophia Tsai***

If you know a member who you would like to see featured, please let us know! If you are a member and would like to be featured, please contact us at [awis-laventura-county@googlegroups.com](mailto:awis-laventura-county@googlegroups.com) ♦



## What has AWIS involvement meant for YOU?

*In the words of a fellow member...*  
Maria-Elena de Bellard at CSUN shares her experience:

"Up until our AWIS meeting I was contemplating the possibility of going to Indonesia and getting more involved with my research goal on the study of the evolution of glial cells and shark development (that's where you get tons of them!). However, the Chair of Biology at CSUN, although supportive was discouraging me from taking the step since it will delay my tenure. I was already doing very well and could request an early promotion next year but was dragging my feet about taking that step. After our AWIS event with Cindy (I forgot her name, from UCR, chemistry, fabulous!) and seeing how she took turns in her professional career that turned out to be for the good in the end, I realized I should take my own turn! Cindy also told me when I asked her specifically about this career move: go for it!

Thus this special event was fruitful for me in that Cindy gave me the encouragement to take this exciting step in my professional career."

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### NEXT MEETING

JUNE 2009

PLACE – UCLA

Biotechnology Start-up Panel

### QUARTERLY MEETINGS

SEPTEMBER 2009

PLACE – AMGEN

"Non-Traditional Careers...Off the Beaten Path..."

DECEMBER 2009

PLACE – LA COUNTY

### NETWORKING EVENTS

We will be planning for monthly networking events during months we do not have a quarterly meeting – contact us if you are interested in helping to organize these events!

## First LAVC AWIS Event of 2009

### "A Twisted Path Makes for an Interesting Journey"

*Written by: Laura Hoopes, Secretary*

At the AWIS LAVC winter event on January 21, 2009 at Amgen's Conference Center, Grace Jiang introduced the speaker, Dr. Cynthia K. Larive, Professor of Chemistry at UC Riverside. Her talk was entitled "A Twisted Path Makes for an Interesting Journey."

Dr. Larive gave a very informal and engaging talk to a large audience, discussing her early work with a chemistry set, her plan to become a high school teacher, her revelation in leading tours of a mine that science was a possible career, two runs at graduate school, and her positions at two research university chemistry departments. She married and had two daughters along the way.

She gave advice on many issues. To advance at work, she felt one must understand the organization's value system, possibly move to a new organization, demonstrate professional and personal competence, and develop your leadership skills. She gave specific tips for each of these points.

One of her bottom lines was "If you are not happy at work, you have the responsibility to work on making changes to your life." She also advised us to focus on home at home and work at work.

She praised AWIS LAVC as a great networking opportunity, and after she answered many questions, those present enjoyed snacks and drinks and indulged in a period of just that: networking with all the others present.♦

Interested in becoming more involved in the chapter? Do you have an idea for a networking event? Is there a great speaker you would like to hear? If yes, please let us know!

Please contact Safura Babu-Khan at [safurab@amgen.com](mailto:safurab@amgen.com) or send an email to [awis-laventura-county@googlegroups.com](mailto:awis-laventura-county@googlegroups.com)

## Science Writing and Journalism Panel Event....Meet the distinguished panel!

**Greg Crister** is a longtime journalist and observer of the medical industry. His work has appeared in dozens of magazines and newspapers, from Harper's, the New Yorker, and National Geographic to the New York Times, the Washington Post, the LA Times and the Times of London; his 2000 essay for Harper's was named "one of the most important science articles" of that year and was published in "Best Science Writing, 2000."

His best-selling 2003 book, "Fat Land: How Americans Became the Fattest People in the World" (Houghton Mifflin), was declared, by the president of the American Diabetes Association, as "the definitive journalistic account of the American obesity epidemic." The book won the Harry Chapin award for non-fiction, and has been translated into six foreign languages. A really fat critic of "Fat Land" once threatened "to sit on" Critser as retaliation for the book. In late 2005, Critser's "Generation Rx: How Prescription Drugs are Altering American Lives, Minds and Bodies" (Houghton) was published; the Sunday New York Times promptly dubbed it "an unexpected delight," while the daily Times book section proclaimed it "lucid and important." "Generation Rx" was a finalist for the Pen Literary Award in Research Nonfiction.

Critser is also a well-known commentator/blowhard on medicine, health and food, with more than 100 appearances on public radio, TV, and all three networks. He is a sought-after speaker for international businesses, health consortia, and educational institutions, ranging from Stanford University to Columbia to UCLA Medical School, which, among many others, have adopted his books as texts. He lives in Pasadena with his wife Antoinette Mongelli.

**Dave Zobel** is a freelance writer for the radio show "The Loh Down on Science," hosted by Sandra Tsing Loh (Caltech '83). He has also written for public radio's "Says You!", the University of Texas's "StarDate," and the venerable "Dr. Demento Show." On the Web, he is a frequent contributor to "A.Word.A.Day" and Wolfram Research's "MathWorld," and he has penned one or two press releases for the Caltech Public Relations department. In between presentations of his one-man show for elementary- and middle-school students on "What It's Like to Be a Science Writer," he makes the occasional science-related television appearance.

His own private fifteen minutes came when, in 2004, he won the international Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest (otherwise known as the "It Was a Dark and Stormy Night" contest for "the opening sentence to the worst novel never written"). This he was able to milk into not only an NPR commentary but also a pair of feature articles in the pages of GAMES Magazine and Caltech News. He has written two musicals (the non-musical bits), each of which closed after one performance, and an astonishingly unhelpful sailing primer (Dave Zobel's Bent Book of Boatspeak).

Currently, he is co-authoring a book exploring how (or indeed whether) humanity can wean itself off fossil fuels. A member of the National Association of Science Writers and the Southern California Science Writers' Association, Zobel squeaked by with a BS in Computer Science from Caltech in 1984, where he wrote a math-humor column for The California Tech called "Q.E.D." Not included among his happiest memories is the recollection of begging Richard Feynman (unsuccessfully) not to fail him.

**Jorge Cham** is the creator of Piled Higher and Deeper (PHD), the comic strip about life (or the lack thereof) in Academia. Often called the Dilbert of academia, PHD has appeared in the Stanford, MIT, Caltech and Carnegie Mellon newspapers among others, and is published online where it receives over 11 million page views a month from over 1000 universities and colleges worldwide. PHD has been featured in Science Magazine, the Journal Nature, the Chronicle of Higher Education and the Times Higher Education.

Jorge Cham was born and raised in the Republic of Panama. He obtained his B.S. from Georgia Tech and his M.S. and Ph.D. from Stanford University, specializing in Robotics. He was subsequently an Instructor and Research Associate at Caltech from 2003-2005, where his work focused on developing "Smart" Neural Implants. He travels and presents all over the world to thousands of graduate students, faculty and administrators on his comics and the graduate student experience. ♦

## A Brief Report from the AWIS LA/VC Networking Events



In photo from left to right: Aditi Joshi, Hoorig Nassanian, Karine Bouyer, Yuko Ishii, Jennifer Gordon and Jennifer Armstrong

And they walked and walked...

Those who were able to participate in the hike along the Solstice Canyon Loop on April 4<sup>th</sup> know that the hike on was a fun-filled day for all!

The Stars Came Out!

The AWIS Star Party was held on March 7<sup>th</sup> and provided an opportunity for LA/VC Members to gather for fun, science and networking!

### Women in the News !

#### **And the winner is....the Top Prize in Computing was Awarded to a Female MIT Professor**

Barbara Liskov, a veteran Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor who created building blocks for software programming languages that were key to personal computers and the Internet, was named Tuesday the winner of the 2008 A.M. Turing Award, the most prestigious prize in computer science.

The award, known in technology circles as the Nobel Prize of computing, is named for legendary British mathematician Alan Turing, who helped the Allies break German naval codes during World War II. It will be presented to Liskov by the Association for Computing Machinery, a scientific society, at a conference in San Diego in June.

Liskov, 69, an institute professor and associate provost at MIT, is being honored for her innovations in "building the pervasive computer system designs that power daily life," the association said in a statement set to be released today. "Her achievements in programming language design have made software more reliable and easier to maintain."

The full article is available from The Boston Globe online: <http://snipr.com/dlbj>

*Special thanks to Donna Simmons, PhD from USC for bringing this news to our attention so it could be shared with fellow AWIS Members.*