



# Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology

Empowering and Supporting Women in Science since 1981

SCWIST Newsletter

January 2008

## Message from the President



Best wishes to all for a healthy, happy and prosperous 2008!!

We are pleased to report that we have several exciting initiatives planned for 2008. Upcoming events include Tools for Transition: Navigating Change and Making Life-Shaping Decisions, a series of workshops that to be held in January and February. Our BrownBag Series will also continue in 2008.

On November 1<sup>st</sup>, we moved to a new office location and we are happily settling in.

We held our first few board meetings with our new team and we are already starting to see some excellent results. At our Strategic Planning Session in the fall we identified our mission, vision and goals and will continue to recruit volunteers in the new year to assist in implementing these plans. Please [scwist@sfu.ca](mailto:scwist@sfu.ca) to volunteer today!

At our December board meeting, we held our first virtual meeting via WebEx which went extremely well. We are embracing new technology and find that this tool is an excellent way to communicate and share ideas and plans as we grow as an organization.

Our second official Membership and Fundraising Drive was launched on November 22, 2007. Directors personally contacted members requesting donations for a number of SCWIST initiatives. This was a very successful fundraising drive and we raised over \$4000. Thank you to everyone who contributed to help create a sustainable financial environment for SCWIST.

A special thank you goes out to members who have volunteered their time with our committees. I am honoured to work with such an outstanding group of women in promoting and improving the opportunities for women in science and technology.

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**Save the Date!**  
**The 2008**  
**SCWIST AGM**  
will be held the  
evening of  
**Wednesday June**  
**18th. Details to**  
**follow.**

**Would you like to attend SCWIST**  
**events?**

**Become a member today!**

**Visit [www.scwist.ca](http://www.scwist.ca)**  
**for more details.**

**Is your membership about to**  
**expire?**

**Renew before your expiration date**  
**and be eligible for prize draws at next**  
**year's AGM. Contact [scwist@sfu.ca](mailto:scwist@sfu.ca).**

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### Fundraising Update—Perveen Biln

On November 22<sup>th</sup> SCWIST was proud to present SCWIST Day, an annual daylong event when we celebrate all things SCWIST. For our first ever SCWIST day we held our annual major fundraising drive, where board members contacted the SCWIST membership via email and telephone to request financial gifts and contacts to approach for memberships. We had set a lofty goal of raising \$10,000 over the fiscal year. Monies raised are earmarked for 3 different initiatives:

(1) Supporting our partnership with the Student Biotechnology Roundtable. SCWIST and SBN jointly hosted the Women in Biotechnology Roundtable at VanDusen Botanical Gardens on Nov 29<sup>th</sup>

(2) Supporting Symposium for Women Entering Ecology and Evolution being held at UBC during the annual meetings of the Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution

Both of these initiatives are geared toward female graduates students studying in a fields of Science and Technology, with the primary goal of connecting the young women with successful female role models – a valued and worthwhile part of the SCWIST mandate. Additionally, through these events SCWIST will be able to pursue some of our strategic goals (increase our profile and increase our membership).

Lastly, some monies will be set aside

(3) Purchasing a not-for-profit membership management program

Through the telethon we have received \$4030.00. This amount is less than was pledged, so if you have not yet sent in your donation please visit the SCWIST website at [www.scwist.ca](http://www.scwist.ca) and click the 'Donate Now' button to give your donation online. As a board, SCWIST is very proud of the success we have been having with our fundraising efforts as the monies raised are enabling us to continue to grow and build our organisation to meet the needs of our members and to continue the great work that we've been doing without taking funds away from our valued programs such as ms infinity. SCWIST will be holding future fundraising events so keep an eye out for information in the newsletters and e-bulletins.

One of the great benefits of this past campaign was the opportunity board members had to connect and speak with members about SCWIST. The board was excited to hear your thoughts on SCWIST programs and really hear the needs of our membership. We were happy to know that many of you were excited about upcoming workshops and seminar series. Some of you also had excellent ideas for future fundraising campaigns. I would love to have you contact me at [pbiln@telus.net](mailto:pbiln@telus.net) if you would like assist with our efforts. Unfortunately, although we tried, we were unable to reach some you. If you did not hear from us and would still like to donate or have any questions please visit our website at [www.scwist.ca](http://www.scwist.ca) or contact me directly.

## THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

A big thanks to some AMAZING volunteers:

Seedlings Studio continues to donate its services providing web support for the new site. [www.SeedlingsStudio.com](http://www.SeedlingsStudio.com)

Michelle La Haye compiles all of the BrownBag data each month so that we can post concise minutes on the website.

Queenie Chan is coordinating the BrownBag series for us this year.

Thanks also to Aimee Chan at Norsat and Jonathan Nakane at UBC's Engineering Physics Project Lab for the generous donation of furniture for our new offices.

**Membership lapsed? Renew online today so that we can continue to provide quality programs! Visit [www.scwist.ca](http://www.scwist.ca)**



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IWIS  
update



ms infinity  
update

Have you thought about mentoring? If you are interested in being paired with a scientific woman who has immigrated to Canada to share your experiences and expertise regarding your line of work, please contact [iwis2@sfu.ca](mailto:iwis2@sfu.ca) for further details.

## Confronting Perimenopause Myths

Estrogen's Storm Season by Dr. Jerilynn Prior

How do real women negotiate the mass of information (and misinformation!) out there on understanding the changes in their bodies and sense of self during perimenopause?

Dr. Jerilynn Prior, Professor of Endocrinology and Metabolism at UBC and Director of the Centre for Menstrual Cycle and Ovulation Research (CeMCOR), created a fictional account of eight frustrated middle-aged women who eventually find an expert doctor who understands their challenges and supports their ways of coping, lifestyles and different choices in therapies.

"Estrogen's Storm Season provides perimenopausal women (and their healthcare providers) with brilliant insights and practical solutions to help them weather the rigors of this important life stage", says Christiane Northrup, MD, author of *Mother-Daughter Wisdom*, *The Wisdom of Menopause*, and *Women's Body, Women's Wisdom*.

Kathleen O'Grady of the Simone de Beauvoir Institute, Concordia University writes: "Prior teaches the essential facts of perimenopause through stories instead of cold medical diagrams and jargon. In so doing, she proves that complicated medical facts and debates may resonate more with women if they are embedded first in women's actual lives. *Estrogen's Storm Season* is an engaging and thoughtful account of the various struggles some women may experience with perimenopause."

To order a copy of the book, go to the CeMCOR website ([www.cemcor.ubc.ca](http://www.cemcor.ubc.ca)). Proceeds of the sale of the book go to support further research.



As with most of us at this time of year, the ms infinity program is taking stock— looking back at our accomplishments during 2007 and setting some goals for 2008.

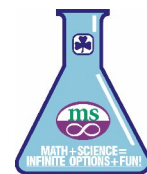
Last year began with the first of 3 Telementoring sessions. Telementoring is formatted into 10-week sessions from January until June with a summer break and commencing again in October. We had 18 students participate from 100-Mile House, 70-Mile House, Lone Bute and Chilliwack. Students explored career options in biochemistry, zoology, electrical engineering, botany, environmental science, fisheries and natural resources management, health sciences, business development and biomedical research.

ms infinity facilitated hands-on workshops at a Girl Guide fair in Maple Ridge and at the Girlz Unplugged YWCA day camp. In 2007, with generous contributions from Science World, we hosted our first Brownie Science Day for some very excited little girls. Our biggest event last year was the international Girl Guide camp in Parksville, SOAR 2007. Pat Nickel lead 200 guides in a wide variety of chemistry experiments, such as making their own bath bombs and launching film canister rockets. In partnership with Genome BC and Let's Talk Science, we created a wildly popular workshop using forensic investigation of a fake murder for the guides to learn about genetics. Sessions had to be doubled to twice a day to accommodate all of the 430 girls who had enrolled in the "Camp Scene Investigation" workshop.

Last year ended with a Quantum Leaps conference in Terrace hosted by the Northwest Science and Innovation Society (NSIS). There were 40 high school participants, 12 panellists and a Science Fiction writer (among other accomplishments) for the keynote address. NSIS has plans to host more Quantum Leaps conferences in Prince Rupert, Kitimat and Smithers.

This year also began with a new Telementoring session. In February we will be attending a resource fair for Girl Guides from across BC and in March we attend BC Innovation Society's Science Fair and Career Expo, both great opportunities to promote ms infinity. Also in March is our first conference of 2008. St Margaret's School for Girls in Victoria will be hosting a ms infinity conference for more than 400 of their students. There will be 40 Role Models participating in panel discussion and leading hands-on science workshops. A delegation of ms infinity Role Models from the Vancouver area will be doing a road trip to St Margaret's for the day.

Our goals for 2008 are to host 2 Guide Science Days and 1 Brownie Science Day, increase Telementoring participation to include Yukon and Nunavut, revise our conference manuals, combining them into one document and offering it in various formats, and recruit a volunteer to update the ms infinity website. But as with every year, our overarching goal is to show girls how much fun science can be.





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## Lost in the labyrinth and other tales from the SCWIST Archives—Julia Vaughan

Thanks to Evelyn Palmer, a SCWIST member since 1982, and a group of dedicated volunteers, SCWIST's history is being preserved. SCWIST has made a number of donations to the Simon Fraser University Archives of documents that date back to the origins of the society. Starting in 1997, Maria Issa (President 1995-96) donated a large collection of SCWIST records that had been stored at her home. SFU archivists and SCWIST volunteers organised the documents into "fonds", a technical term describing a true archive of records that are created or received by the society. Certain files were declared "access restricted" in order to safeguard personal information. Ranging from the original bylaws, minutes from board meetings and AGMs, financials, and membership lists, to newsletters, event posters, photographs, audio tapes and videos, the SCWIST archive provides scholars with a rich resource to study both the changing environment for women scientists and the organisational development of a women's society. As of 2002, SCWIST has agreed to make additional donations to SFU every five years. The office move in the fall of 2007 coincided with Evelyn's reminder that the next scheduled archival gift was due, and provided the perfect opportunity for a really thorough review of the many files, shelves and drawers of paper, paper, and yet more paper! An intrepid band of volunteers comprised of Hilda Ching, Hiromi Matsui, Evelyn Palmer, Shauna Paull and Julia Vaughan, met over three days in October to sort and select materials for the archive.

What seemed initially to be a daunting task became a fascinating journey back through SCWIST's colourful past. In particular, Hilda's phenomenal memory and detailed knowledge of SCWIST's history was essential for decoding some of the more arcane materials! And many a photograph, event flyer or program handbook sparked a story about old friends. One folder contained hand-typed minutes from a board meeting back in June of 1992 where it was noted that a board member had missed the first 10 minutes due to being "lost and circulating in the labyrinth". This was back in the days when the SCWIST Resource Centre was located in the depths of the SFU Harbour Centre. Another contained nearly eight years of carefully preserved event posters that showed the changing image of SCWIST – it was interesting to see the central female symbol of the first logo used until around 1996, and to reflect on how the perception of that symbol and its relation to feminism have changed over the years. Vivian Chamberlain won a bottle of wine for her atomic diagram logo back in 1982. The current logo was designed with the help of Linda Coe Graphic Design Limited in 1996. Another sheaf of paperwork showed how SCWIST board members were certified to carry out an evening's work in a casino; at the time, BC Gaming allocated funds to charities by allowing organizations to "earn" a percentage of the evening's takings. Current board members are most relieved that funds are now allocated through a grant application process! Most impressive was the number of programs, projects, and events organised by SCWIST members over the past 26 years. Project Tomorrow, Girls in Science, Work Pathfinder, Female Friendly Science Teaching are among the programs where materials have been carefully preserved for the archive donation.

Countless recycling bins full-to-the-brim later, eight banker's boxes remained containing the selected materials. The next stage in the process was a review of the materials by SFU Archivist Frances Fournier. The SFU Archives Program mandate includes a strong interest in archives relating to women's issues. In addition, there has been, as Hilda puts it, "a pleasant symbiotic relationship with the women at SFU in many ways," with much overlap between SCWIST and SFU faculty and staff. SCWIST has been very lucky in its association with Frances Fournier. An archivist at SFU since 1990, she has a long interest in women's organisations and this interest drives her to help preserve our history. The summaries of the SCWIST archive, which may be found online, provide a great overview of the society and would be a good starting place for any new member.

The next donation is due in 2012, by which time many of the SCWIST records may well be electronic. This poses an interesting problem since reliable methods of maintaining electronic archives are still an area of open research. Technology and hardware is changing so rapidly that carefully backed-up records can become unreadable within a decade. Fortunately Archives programs, such as at SFU, retain obsolete machines just for this purpose. In addition, backup media suffers from degradation. For example, video only lasts 15-25 years due to the breakdown of the iron oxide that holds the magnetic particles to the tape, and as yet no one knows the longevity of DVDs or CDs. Finally, new ways are needed to organise and archive the mass of communications through email and record the transience of websites. Until a solution to these problems is found, Frances recommends to keep on with paper records, so it looks as though there will still be reams of paper (recycled, of course!) to sort through in 2012!

SCWIST would like to thank volunteers Hilda Ching (Founding Member, President 1984-86, 1994-95), Hiromi Matsui (President 1997-99), Evelyn Palmer, and Shauna Paull (former bookkeeper and IWIS Chair). A detailed description of the SCWIST archive may be found online at <http://www.sfu.ca/archives2/F-39/F-39.html>



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### Making a Difference for Women in Science and Technology

Being the change you want to see

“I remember the day Prof. Barbara Frisken asked if I would serve on the SCWIST board”, says Dr. Elana Brief, current SCWIST Treasurer. “I thought – who me? – what can I do?” After the first year of being a director on the SCWIST board, Elana figured out what she could do. She directed her energies into creating seminars and workshops for women graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to manage the transitions in their lives.

“I think that every board member brings a different perspective to the board – and that’s what’s necessary”, says Elana. “We need diverse perspectives to support the many different types of women who are members of SCWIST.”

In the next few months, the current SCWIST board members will be determining which skills and backgrounds are missing from the board. If you are interested in helping to direct and support the organisation to better meet the needs of women in science and technology, please email [scwist@sfu.ca](mailto:scwist@sfu.ca).

**SAVE THE DATE: April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

#### Translations and Adaptations: International Tales of Women’s Creativity

One of SCWIST’s founders, Dr. Abby Schwarz was also one of the original members of the Boston Women’s Health Book Collective (BWHBC) who wrote *Our Bodies Ourselves* in 1970. Abby has arranged for Judy Nor-sigian (Executive Director of BWHBC) to stop in Vancouver during a West Coast book tour to talk with SCWIST members.

The excitement of having Judy in town has brought together several organisations including The Women’s Health Research Network ([www.whrn.ca](http://www.whrn.ca)) and the Centre for Menstrual Cycle and Ovulation Research ([www.cemcor.ubc.ca](http://www.cemcor.ubc.ca)).

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, we will have a web-cast talk based in Vancouver on how the BWHBC has helped women across the world translate and adapt *Our Bodies Ourselves* for their communities. The book now has 29 editions in diverse languages worldwide, all of which have made information on women’s health and rights available in communities where such information is scarce or altogether lacking. Most recently, women’s groups in Albania, Russia, South Korea, and Tibet have produced new publications in book and other formats.

#### Welcome new Board members

Two women recently joined vacated positions on the SCWIST Board:

Kim Hellemans is a Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR) / Integrated Mentorship Program in Addictions Research Training (IMPART) Post-doctoral Fellow in the Department of Cellular and Physiological Sciences at the University of British Columbia.

Karen Mooder is currently employed as a Senior Scientist at Sirius Genomics, a molecular diagnostics company whose aim is to develop genetic tests for use in the diagnosis and treatment of sepsis. She is particularly interested in fostering an appreciation for the scientific method in a broader female audience and facilitating the creation of programs to help people in both academia and industry in becoming effective mentors.



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### SCWIST Scholarship winners—2007

Congratulations to the following recipients of the 2007-2008 SCWIST Scholarships:

#### SCWIST Margaret Lowe Benston Memorial Award

Marie Mattson — Marie is studying in the Architectural and Building Engineering Technology department at the British Columbia Institute of Technology

#### SCWIST—Michael Smith Scholarship

Lauren Feldhoff — Lauren is a fourth year BioChemistry and Molecular Biology student at the University of British Columbia

#### Debbe Gervin Memorial Bursary

Mei Li — Mei is attending BCIT's Network Administration and Security Professional program.

All recipients received a \$500 cash prize as well as a free one year SCWIST membership.



Marie Mattson receiving her award from SCWIST Treasurer Elana Brief

Attention all  
undergraduates!

SCWIST is again holding its networking XX Evening for women in science, engineering and technology on

Tuesday March 4, 2008

@ 5:15 PM

Find out how amazing women are making careers in science and technology.

The cost of the event is \$12 and includes pizza, networking and the Omnimax film Dinosaurs Alive!

Please pre-register by February 29th by calling Science World at 604-443-7551 or emailing-  
[jscott@scienceworld.bc.ca](mailto:jscott@scienceworld.bc.ca)

**SCIENCE  
WORLD**  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Want to get more involved?  
Volunteer at SCWIST!  
Contact [scwist@sfu.ca](mailto:scwist@sfu.ca) for details.

No time to volunteer?  
You can still support SCWIST:  
Donate online (and receive a tax receipt)



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## SCWIST Member Benefits

### Are you getting all you can out of your SCWIST membership?

- Workshops for women in science and technology (receive reduced rates for members)
- Leadership opportunities in a supportive environment (telementor a girl interested in science, volunteer for a committee, offer an idea for an initiative or event)
- News from our website (post and learn about events of interest for women in science)
- National communication (contribute articles or ideas to the newsletter)

## SCWIST's charitable status

SCWIST is a registered charity and issues tax receipts for all donations.

We invite you to contact [scwist@sfu.ca](mailto:scwist@sfu.ca) if you wish to make a gift to support our programs for girls and women.

### What's the difference between a Sustaining and Professional Membership?

A sustaining membership (\$100) combines a professional membership (\$60) and a \$40 (tax-deductible) donation to SCWIST. Sustaining members truly sustain SCWIST by supporting the charitable programs we run.

## Who we are

The Society of Canadian Women in Science and Technology is a non-profit, voluntary association established in 1981 to promote, encourage and empower women working in science and technology.

## Our Mission Statement

- To promote public awareness of the opportunities for women in science and technology by providing information and resources which aim to influence public policy and present positive messages about women's achievements and potential in this area.
- To encourage the full participation of girls and women in all aspects of science and technology education, through the provision of programs and activities which are developed and implemented in partnership with relevant community members.
- To increase the representation, retention and status of women in the science and technology workplace by providing networking and mentoring opportunities and advocating for women-friendly workplaces and education policies.

## Membership Fees

Fees can now be paid online through: <http://www.scwist.ca>

Student/Retired/Unemployed	\$20/year
Professional	\$60/year
Sustaining (see panel)	\$100/year (including \$40 tax receipt)

## Let us know what you think

SCWIST Resource Centre  
[scwist@sfu.ca](mailto:scwist@sfu.ca)

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Immigrating Women in Science (IWIS)  
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