

## **WISENET Newsletter – Oct/Nov**

### **Help!**

If anyone is interested in having a more active role in WISENET please give me a call (or e-mail). I'd like to share the Vic convenor position with someone. It doesn't take up a lot of time but it's a very busy world and it would help to share the load.

### **Upcoming Events:**

The monthly meetings of the **Monash/Clayton group** have been continuing. Meetings are held on various days during the first week of each month at the Monash University Science Center. Bring your own lunch or arrive early to purchase it from the café. For further details or to be added to the Monash mailing list please contact Alena Glaister (Alena.Glaister@sci.monash.edu.au), phone 9905 5658 or 9905 5643.

There will be a wine and cheese gathering in the **Parkville/Carlton** area on Wed 29th of October at 5.30pm. Jan Thomas has offered us the use of the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute ([www.asmi.org.au](http://www.asmi.org.au)) seminar/tea room which is on the ground floor of the new ICT building on the Western side of University Square between two sets of terrace houses (Street address: 111 Barry St, Carlton). The doors should be open until approx 6.30pm, but if you find them locked contact Jan on 041 900 6205. There should be street parking available at this time of the day, alternatively you can park in the Underground parking for \$2; enter off Berkley Street near the intersection with Grattan St.

I hope that WISENET members from across Melbourne (and Victoria?) will attend, and invite their friends. This event is also intended to be a starting point for a Parkville/Carlton based group that can meet regularly so please think about what kind of events you would like to see happen in your local area. I'm also keen to hear from someone based in the area who would be prepared to take responsibility for running these meetings. Or perhaps a group of 2 or 3 women to share the job. It shouldn't take a lot of time but will help to spread the load.

Unfortunately I have to send my apologies for this meeting but hopefully it will be such a success that I will get to meet you all at the next meeting.

### **Jobs in engineering – Deadline Oct 31st**

The University of Melbourne is advertising three postdoctoral research positions in engineering, for women only. Closing date for applications is 31 October 2003.

[http://uninews.unimelb.edu.au/articleid\\_928.html](http://uninews.unimelb.edu.au/articleid_928.html)

### **Victorian Life Sciences Ball**

An e-mail invitation from David Burns:

“Recently one of our number, Lara Grollo, contacted you regarding the formation of some sort of a network among postgraduate, postdoctoral and other young scientists across Victoria, including those working in, but not limited to, universities, institutions, commercial environments and hospitals across Victoria.

Further to that aim we have formed a company called BioEventya, and are holding a major social event for this group. The inaugural Victorian Life Sciences Ball will be held in late November at the Rialto Observation Deck and will be an exclusive and stylish occasion for these young professionals to network with one another.

The details in brief are:

Victorian Life Sciences Ball  
Rialto Tower Observation Deck  
Friday November 21 2003  
7.30pm-12.30am

Guest speaker: Laureate Professor Peter Doherty

Tickets will cost \$60 for students and \$65 for non-students, which we believe represents very good value for the opportunity provided. Full details can be found at [www.bioeventya.com](http://www.bioeventya.com) or email [information@bioeventya.com](mailto:information@bioeventya.com). We will soon be issuing ticket reservation notices, and with only 350 tickets available reserving tickets is strongly recommended to ensure attendance.

We are a group of life science PhD students in a company sponsored by Young Achievement Australia (YAA), a government sponsored non-profit initiative. This program is designed to promote understanding and development of business skills within the life sciences and biotechnology sector.

Our hope is that this ball will act as an initiator of further gatherings of young life scientists, promoting friendships and contacts across a range of work environments.

If you could pass this on to those in your department, most particularly postgraduate students and early postdocs, but also once more to the Science, Engineering and Pharmacy faculties, we would be most grateful.

Yours sincerely,  
David Burns

## **Want to be a star?**

THE NINE NETWORK NEEDS SCIENTISTS (of all disciplines)

Get out of the lab and into the studio! Here's your chance to be a part of the next TEST AUSTRALIA live television event - and show Australia your extensive knowledge!

The last two TEST AUSTRALIA (The National IQ Test and The National Driving Test) programs were the highest rating shows of the year. Hosted by Eddie McGuire and Catriona Rowntree, the next TEST AUSTRALIA needs a group of over 40 Scientists, to be a part of the show.

In all there will be 6 groups - representing a cross section of the Australian community. The atmosphere is high energy and lots of fun. If you'd like to be a part of this fantastic television event, please contact Sarah on the number below for more information.

Sarah Neal  
Channel Nine  
9420 3085

## **From the AWIS (NZ) mailing list (thank's Jean)**

A woman named Emily renewing her driver's license at the County Clerk's office was asked by the woman recorder to state her occupation. She hesitated, uncertain how to classify herself. 'What I mean is' explained the recorder, 'do you have a job, or are you just a .....?' 'Of course i have a job' snapped Emily, 'I'm a Mum'. 'We do not list Mum as an occupation...Housewife covers' said the recorder emphatically.

I forgot all about her story until one day I found myself in the same situation, this time at our own Council office. The Clerk was obviously a career woman, poised, efficient and possessed of a high sounding title like - Official Interrogator or Town Registrar.

'What is your occupation?' she probed. What made me say it, I do not know.

The words simply popped out. 'I'm a Research Associate in the field of Child Development and Human Relations'

The clerk paused, ball-point pen frozen in midair, and looked up as though she had not heard right. I repeated the title slowly, emphasizing the most significant words. Then I stared with wonder as my pronouncement was written in bold, black ink on the official questionnaire.

'Might I ask', said the clerk with new interest, 'just what you do in your field?'

Coolly, without any trace of fluster in my voice, I heard myself reply; 'I have a continuing program of research, (what mother does not), in the laboratory and in the field, (normally I would have said indoors and out). I'm working for my Masters, (the whole darned family), and already have four credits (all daughters). of course, the job is one of the most demanding in the humanities, (any mother care to disagree?) and I often work 14 hours a day, (24 is more like it). But the job is more challenging than most run-of-the-mill careers and the rewards are more of a satisfaction rather than just money.'

There was an increasing note of respect in the clerk's voice as she completed the form, stood up, and personally ushered me to the door.

As I drove into our driveway, buoyed up by my new glamorous career, I was greeted by my laboratory assistants - ages 13, 7, and 3. Upstairs I could hear the new experimental model, (a 6 months old baby), in the child-development program, testing out a new vocal pattern. I felt I had scored a beat on bureaucracy! And I had gone on official records as someone more distinguished and indispensable to mankind than just another Mum.

Motherhood.... What a glorious career! Especially when there is a title on the door.

Does this make Grandmothers; Senior Research Associates in the field of Child Development and Human Relations; and Great-grandmothers; Executive Senior Research Associates?; I think so!!! I also think it makes Aunts; Associate Research Assistants.

### **Also from the AWIS (NZ) list (thanks to Lyn)**

The Breast Cancer site is having trouble getting enough people to click on it daily to meet their quota of donating at least one free mammogram a day to an underprivileged woman. It takes less than a minute to go to their site and click on "donating a mammogram" for free (pink window in the middle). This doesn't cost you a thing. Their corporate sponsors/advertisers use the number of daily visits to donate mammogram in exchange for advertising. Here's the web site!

<http://www.thebreastcancersite.com>

### **An interesting item from the USA**

The Chronicle for Higher Education 30.9.03  
<http://chronicle.com/prm/daily/2003/09/2003093001n.htm>

#### **Princeton U. Says It May Spend Millions to Improve Gender Equity on Science Faculty**

By [ROBIN WILSON <mailto:robin.wilson@chronicle.com>](mailto:robin.wilson@chronicle.com)

Princeton University announced on Monday that it had appointed a new administrator to oversee gender-

equity issues, following the recommendations of a group of professors that spent more than a year studying the status of female faculty members on the campus.

Joan S. Girgus, a professor of psychology who has been at Princeton since 1977, was named special assistant to the dean of the faculty. She is one of 11 people who served on the Task Force on the Status of Women Faculty in the Sciences and Engineering, which was created in 2001 by Princeton's president, Shirley M. Tilghman, who is a molecular biologist.

In a report issued on Monday, the panel said that the proportion of female professors in the sciences and engineering at Princeton remains small, and that female faculty members in the fields are not as happy as their male counterparts.

The panel recommended that Princeton establish a \$10-million fund to "promote the recruitment, hiring, and retention of women faculty" in the sciences and engineering.

At a news conference on Monday, Ms. Tilghman said it was not clear yet how much money Princeton would spend, and on what. "I fully intend to make resources available to meet the recommendations of the task force," she said. "How we do that -- whether we do it by setting aside a specific fund or whether we do it within budgets that already exist within the university -- is something the provost and I are still determining."

In an interview, Ms. Girgus said she would coordinate Princeton's efforts to attract and retain female faculty members. High on her list of priorities is expanding on-campus day care for the children of Princeton professors -- something she said is now "minimal." Ms. Girgus also said that Princeton wants to focus more energy on helping the spouses and partners of Princeton professors find work, on the campus and in the community.

The group on the status of women was created after the leaders of nine research universities, including Princeton, met at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2001 and decried the lack of female professors in the sciences ([The Chronicle](http://www.thechronicle.com/weekly/v47/i22/22a01202.htm), </weekly/v47/i22/22a01202.htm> February 9, 2001).

The Princeton panel surveyed professors in the sciences and engineering, and analyzed hiring records, salaries, and the rates at which men and women are granted tenure. It found no difference between male and female faculty members in salaries or tenure rates. But it found that while some science and engineering departments had hired more women over the past 10 years, others had not.

Over all, the percentage of female faculty members in the natural sciences and engineering at Princeton increased to 13.9 percent from 8.4 percent from 1992 to 2002. But four departments saw no increase in the proportion of women during that period. And in one department -- molecular biology -- the proportion of female faculty members declined to 19 percent from 30 percent. In only 2 of Princeton's 14 science and engineering departments do women make up more than 20 percent of the faculty.

Women are also "underrepresented" in leadership positions, the report says. Only two science and engineering departments have had a female head, and women held only 5.7 percent of endowed chairs in 2002.

In a survey of faculty members conducted by the Princeton panel, fewer women than men reported feeling a sense of collegiality on the campus and fewer reported having mentors.

"As an institution, Princeton is in good shape in some areas, but less so in others," said Virginia Zakian, who led the faculty group and is a professor of molecular biology at Princeton. "In general, women hired at Princeton have done about as well as men. However, the number of women faculty remains small, and women are not as professionally satisfied at Princeton as their male colleagues."

The full text of the faculty committee's report is available online at the university's [Web site](http://www.princeton.edu/pr/reports/sciencetf/sciencetf-9-19-03.pdf). <http://www.princeton.edu/pr/reports/sciencetf/sciencetf-9-19-03.pdf> It can be viewed using [Adobe Reader](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html). <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html> available free.

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## Science Meets Parliament

New science flag launched

A new flag to celebrate the "Science meets Parliament" Day event will be launched today (Monday) by Science Minister Peter McGauran. The flags will fly from 80 flagpoles in Kings Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue during "Science meets Parliament", which takes place on October 14-15.

Mr McGauran will hoist the first flag on the Questacon flagpole at 10 am on Monday 13 October. The flags measure 3000 mm by 1500 mm. The event brings 250 scientists into Canberra for one-on-one meetings with members of Federal Parliament, to discuss the national investment in science and technology.

Professor Chris Fell, President of FASTS, said that only five out of 226 federal Parliamentarians had a background in science. "We need to build better links between science and Parliamentarians," he said. "We have found that MPs are really interested in talking science. They want to know what science and technology can deliver, and more about the possibilities for new industries and solutions for environmental problems."

The top three issues MPs have nominated for discussion are:

- Water - a critical resource'
- Overcoming soil loss, acidity and salinity
- Frontier technologies - new industries of the future

The issues were taken from a list of 17 topics in the national research priorities.

This will be the fifth annual SmP meeting, and the biggest yet. Registration numbers are noticeably higher than last year, with 25 more Parliamentarians and 40 more scientists participating than in 2002.

## Reminders from the last newsletter:

### Making a Difference: (Sept)

An opportunity from Anna to raise the profile of women in science:

Hello everyone,

I am starting to be inundated with requests from different organisations to nominate women for many prizes, awards, honours etc. My experience is that most women are very shy at nominating themselves or others. It seems appropriate for WISENET to take this role.

While appearing simple, the nominations usually have criteria and require considerable researching and collaboration. I would therefore appreciate each member forwarding me a two page 'self-portrait' as soon as possible so that I can see where best to nominate - and start early! The 2-pager should include your

- name,
- contact details,
- professional history,
- community involvements,
- special services to Australia. etc and if possible,
- the names of one or two people who could act as primary referees. They can be friends or colleagues... just someone that you are happy for us to contact.

If sent by email, could it be in WORD format please - NO photographs at this stage. I just need an overview for the moment and will then get back to you for more information as required.

Nominees need to be financial members of WISENET. Please also let me (or your Link Group Convenor) know if you do not wish to be involved in this or have objections to nomination for any specific type of award.

In emails, I would appreciate the subject title to be as it is in this email. I will have a special mailbox set up to receive the emails automatically. (subject line: **WISENET: Honouring Womens Program**)

I am very much looking forward to being busier in this enjoyable way!!

cheers,  
Anna.

Dr Anna Robinson  
National Convenor,  
Anna Robinson <anna.robinson@bigpond.com>

### **Membership status and the Journal**

Issue 63 of the WISENET Journal has recently been posted out to all current financial members. If you did not receive a copy it is probably because your 2003 subs have not been paid. If you have any questions regarding your membership status please contact me or the Membership secretary, Sally Stowe (stowe@rsbs.anu.edu.au)

### **Newsletter distribution and submissions**

If you would like to circulate anything to WISNET-Vic please send it to me and I will include it in this newsletter.

Please send this newsletter onto friends. If you would like to be added to the mailing list let me know. If you no longer wish to receive these e-mails drop me a line and I'll remove you from the distribution list.

Don't forget to visit the website regularly – particularly the link group pages. The site is constantly being updated. [www.wisenet-australia.org](http://www.wisenet-australia.org)

Diane Webster

diane@burnet.edu.au  
9282 2279