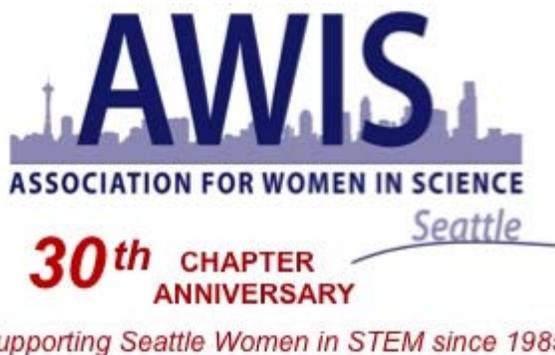


AWIS Newsletter issue #3, spring 2015

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Seattle AWIS Newsletter

April 2015



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Hutch
United

Fostering a Diverse Community

Hutch United partners with Seattle
AWIS

by Reitha Weeks

More is better – especially if it means more support, more networking and more opportunities to promote the talents of women and minorities in science. To those ends, we are excited to announce a partnership between Seattle AWIS and Hutch United!

Hutch United, a relatively new organization of graduate students and post-docs at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, promotes the success of underrepresented and self-identified minority scientists by fostering a supportive and diverse community at Fred Hutch and beyond. Support takes the form of mentoring interactions between faculty, postdocs, graduate students and staff, monthly informal gatherings, seminars identifying challenges and developing solutions, and community outreach events. (www.fhcrc.org/hutchunited)

With goals that are complimentary to those of Seattle AWIS, a collaboration can benefit members of both organizations! Hutch United will join us in co-presenting programs next year that reflect topics of interest to both groups. Tentatively, a fall program that focuses on careers and strategies for success in the biotech industry is being planned. Hutch United will provide communication, organizational and financial support for up to three AWIS programs and will encourage their members to become Seattle AWIS members. Interactions with Hutch United members will provide opportunities for AWIS members to learn more about research at Fred Hutch and their successful programs to increase and support diversity in research.

Profile Article

by Graciela Matrajt

Julie Lutz: paving the road
for gender equality

By Graciela Matrajt



“I couldn’t apply to Caltech as an undergraduate student, but my male friends from high school applied and were accepted. And I had better grades than them.” This was the early 60’s and for Julie Lutz, an astronomer and retired professor from the University of Washington and Washington State University, these gender inequalities did not stop her from pursuing a successful scientific career.

Julie became interested in science at a young age. As a little girl she lived in Hawaii where she would spend nights staring at the dark skies with her father who pointed out constellations to her. She started reading books about astronomy and nature and retained an interest in science through the years. By age ten Julie knew she wanted to become an astronomer. In this era, women were expected to marry and have children, or to get degrees that led to careers as teachers, nurses, or receptionists, Although Julie’s parents never went to college, they were very supportive of her choice to break from the norm and pursue a scientific career. In fact, during her school years, they encouraged Julie’s interest in science. She would get rewarded 25 cents for an A in any subject and 50 cents for an A in math.

Julie started college at sixteen, having skipped a grade in middle school. She attended local colleges for her undergraduate studies: first, the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), and then San Diego State University (SDSU) to join her long-time boyfriend. She preferred the smaller class sizes at SDSU and appreciated the small astronomical observatory in the mountains that students had helped build. San Diego had a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for students to use the observatory to do research on binary stars. For Julie, this was an opportunity to get hands-on experience with a telescope.

Julie received support from the astronomy departments at both UCLA and SDSU in the form of research-related jobs. Despite the paperwork hassles of employing a minor, UCLA gave her an astronomy-related job in her freshman year, working off campus at the Lockheed Astrodynamics Research Center. Not long after she transferred to San Diego, she got an astronomy-related summer job at a company called General Dynamics Astronautics. “This was the beginning of the space age,” Julie explains. “The first satellite was launched in 1957 and I hit college in 1961.” It was also the same time that the race to the Moon was declared. There were many jobs related to calculating interplanetary orbits, and Julie’s job consisted of calculating the shortest way to go to Mars. “People were convinced that if we were

going to the Moon, by the end of the decade, we would go to Mars,” says Julie.

Unfortunately, this type of employment was not always offered to women and there were times that workarounds were needed. “One of my physics professors wanted me to be a grader for his class, but the department chair would not hire a woman,” says Julie. “There were no rules about those things, so there was no way to complain. So he changed my name to a male name, but the official paperwork had my real name,” admits Julie. As a female student things were not any better. While a freshman at UCLA, Julie took an observing course and she did exceedingly well, but she received a B when she was expecting an A. She went to talk with the instructor, a male lecturer, to inquire about her grade. The instructor said that there were quite a few A’s but he did not want to have a too-high grade distribution and so he chose to give Julie a B, because she would never do anything with Astronomy. “Back then people pretty much did what they wanted,” explains Julie with a sigh.

Although most graduate programs were open to female students, a few were not and that created frustration among the women scientists. As an undergraduate student, Julie was single and living in a dormitory. This meant she was subjected to certain restrictions which men were not, such as a ten o’clock curfew, and locked dormitory doors. “I could not get a credit card,” notes Julie. Married women could receive credit under their husband’s name, but single women faced tremendous barriers to buying a house, obtaining credit cards, and becoming eligible for loans. “Fortunately, by the time I got to the credit card sort of stage, I was married.”

Julie graduated with an undergraduate degree from SDSU with a double major in physics and astronomy, determined to pursue a research career in astronomy. However, she had to move to another university because SDSU did not offer PhDs. This was a difficult decision because by then Julie was engaged and her fiancé did not want to leave San Diego (SD). Julie had to decide whether to stay in SD and marry him or leave to do a PhD. “In order to go to grad school I broke up with him. It was a very hard decision. But if I wanted to get a doctorate I had to leave SD,” she explains. Julie was forced to choose between her education and her relationship. She chose her career.

Julie had been the only woman in her undergraduate advanced physics courses and went to grad school knowing that she was entering a world ruled by men. She was accepted into all the programs where she applied and she chose the University of Illinois. There, she met her first husband, Tom Lutz. They got married and had two children during her graduate school years. Tom, also an astronomer, was three years ahead of her. Julie was a teaching assistant when she became pregnant. Her advisor, a man who liked children and had four of his own, arranged for Julie to become a research assistant so that she would have more flexibility when her baby was born. “My husband and I shared an office and we brought our baby in. She slept in the dark room next to our office. Nobody said anything. The department was

supportive of those things,” explains Julie, who passed her qualifying exams while taking care of one child and pregnant with a second. She and Tom made it through by alternating childcare duties and work. To make things work, “You have to be married to the right man,” admits Julie laughing. When Julie’s husband finished his thesis, he got a faculty position at Washington State University (WSU). The whole family moved and Julie continued working on her thesis remotely and observing at Kitt Peak National Observatory in Arizona. Although Julie was three years behind her husband, she finished and obtained her PhD only two years after him. Amazingly, she made up a year while caring for two very young kids.

At that time, spouses were not allowed to work in the same academic department. Those regulations were a serious barrier to employment and affected many academic women. Julie was lucky that the policy changed the year she obtained her PhD and she was able to accept an offer to join her husband in the WSU department of mathematics. Julie and Tom would have fit better in the physics department, but some faculty there were traditionalist males who did not wish to have a female colleague.

Julie started as a temporary part-time faculty member and in just a few years became a full professor. During her career at WSU, she served as chair of the department, Associate Provost, and Associate Dean of the College of Sciences. She also played important roles in advocating for women’s rights. In 1973 Julie joined AWIS. Then, in 1974, she headed a faculty study at WSU that uncovered dramatic differences between the salaries of comparably accomplished and experienced male and female professors, after which WSU rectified the disparities. That same year, Julie along with other female faculty founded the WSU’s Association for Faculty Women.

In other academic fields, women were often not even considered. For example, in space travel, men did not have their female counterparts in mind. “I remember talking with Sally Ride, the first woman in space, who came to visit WSU. She mentioned that they still had not worked out the female plumbing for the spacesuit. And she was scheduled to fly soon and she still did not know how she was going to go to the bathroom in space,” says Julie laughing. “It took them decades to figure those things out.” Women today often do not realize what previous generations of women like Julie went through and how they worked to pave the road for contemporary women to have similar rights as men. “Women often claim they are not feminist. Yes they are,” says Julie, “because they now expect certain things that were not available a few decades ago, and they just take them for granted.”

In the 1980s, Julie branched out into science education, while continuing her research in stellar evolution. She obtained education grants to create programs involving planetarium visits for school groups, using their observatory for public purposes, visiting schools to engage kids with science, and training K-12 teachers.

Some of these programs lasted more than ten years. In 1995 Julie's husband died suddenly from an undiagnosed heart condition. A couple of years later Julie moved to Seattle, where she joined the University of Washington Astronomy Department as a Research Professor and married another astronomer. She continued her research and education missions through programs for the entire Northwest, including Hawaii, which lasted until she retired in 2007. Julie continues working in research and science education. She works with undergraduate students, directs the UW Manastash Ridge Observatory, and coordinates the UW in the High School astronomy courses.

"Gender disparities are still a systematic problem," admits Julie. But today things are much better, thanks to the efforts of women like her.

We certainly owe Julie and many other women of her generation the laws and regulations that protect our rights today.

Thank you Julie! And congratulations on all the successes you have achieved through the years!

Graciela Matrajt is a scientist reinvented as a science communicator and program manager. She works at the UW in a research and education program for under-represented students. She likes to write about science and to participate in outreach activities.

Local Biotech and Pharma News

by Marissa Konstadt



1. Acucela Leadership in Flux. Acucela is a clinical stage biotechnology company in Seattle, and publicly traded company in Japan. Their research involves therapies to prevent sight-threatening outcomes of ophthalmic disease. Toward the end of 2014, Brian O'Callaghan rose from board member to Chief Operating Officer, eventually usurping the title of CEO from founder

Ryo Kubota. The future of Acucela hinges on an upcoming vote between the current Acucela leadership, and other core stakeholders at a court mandated board meeting to be held May 1st. According to a March 15th [Press Release](#), "Acucela will recommend

voting against the proposal to remove the existing directors because the Company believes that continuing with existing leadership would be in the best interest of Acucela and its shareholders.” (Acucela.com, March 15, 2015; Biospace.com, April 6, 2015; BusinessWire, December 22, 2014; Puget Sound Business Journal, April 3, 2015).

2. **Research Grant to Extend Reach of Influenza Vaccines.** The Infections Disease Research Institute (IDRI) recently obtained a \$4Million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service to enable broader production of the influenza vaccine. Developing countries are currently able to produce antigens which create vaccines, but not nearly enough to satisfy the growing demand. IDRI produces adjuvants, which enhance the body’s response to a given antigen, in order to help increase vaccine production by decreasing the amount of antigen needed for each effective dose. Grant money will be used to grow adjuvant manufacturing potential here in Seattle; from the ability to make thousands of doses per day to one million. (Puget Sound Business Journal, February 20, 2015).
3. **UW Scientists partner with Avalanche Biotechnologies (CA) on Potential Cure for Colorblindness.** Colorblindness occurs when people are born with fewer color-sensing proteins (normally found in ‘cones’) in their retina. Jay and Maureen Neitz, a husband and wife team of researchers from the University of Washington, are working on a treatment to replace the missing proteins through gene therapy. They have partnered with California based biotech Avalanche Biotechnologies in order to develop a more direct delivery of their treatment method; one that does not require surgery. The technique involves using a “safe vector, called an adeno-associated virus, to house the pigment gene, which is injected directly into the vitreous, the jellylike center of the eye.” According to cofounder and CEO of Avalanche, Thomas W. Chalberg Jr, “Once there, it targets cells on the back of the retina.” Avalanche and UW have an exclusive licensing agreement to continue this research and get a product to market. For more information about color blindness and treatment, visit: colorvisionawareness.com. ([The Seattle Times](http://www.seattletimes.com), April 11, 2015; [Avalanch.com](http://avalanch.com), March 2015).
4. **Juno Therapeutics Settles Legal Dispute with Novartis.** In their first few months as a publicly traded company, Juno Therapeutics has won \$12.25Million and the ability to license a cancer treatment technology from Novartis, a Switzerland-based pharmaceutical company which also develops T-Cell therapies. The lawsuit was inherited when Juno purchased the technology from St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital. St Jude’s will share in some of the money, and Novartis will continue to use the technology for a fee. (Puget Sound Business Journal, April 6, 2015).

Recent discoveries and

achievements

by Graciela Matrajt

By Graciela Matrajt

Comet 67P contains organic materials: The results of the analysis of comet 67P by the spacecraft Rosetta are now public. This comet, like all others studied so far, contains several organic molecules related to life. The complete results were published in the journal [Science](#).

Dementia and antihistamines: A recent study conducted by local researchers from Group Health and the University of Washington found that the intake of common antihistamines for a period longer than three years might increase the risk of developing dementia. Read full article [here](#).

A possible treatment for Parkinson's disease discovered: A Mexican scientist discovered a possible cure for Parkinson's disease. Read full article [here](#).

Career Development

By Sherrie Edwards



Size does Matter

If you are interested in moving from an academic environment to industry, there will be many nuances to adjust to and assumptions to be checked, before you make the leap. In addition to the actual mission of an organization and the culture of the people you will be working, there are other practical considerations to be examined and taken into account as you look at new roles.

Titles don't necessarily reflect the same level of responsibility, nor do they mean the same thing across industries. The context of the positions you have held does/should make a difference to someone who is determining if you are a fit or not. More experience in one area doesn't necessarily make up for a shortcoming in another. The following are some fairly basic points to think about.

Large vs. small. Size does matter. In a large organization, a candidate's level of responsibility is often greater than someone with the same or even higher-level title

in a smaller organization. The evidence can be recognized by the number of reports they had and the size of budget they managed. As an example, a “manager” of a department of 50 could easily have more advanced skills/deeper experience than a “director” with only two reports and a smaller budget. A “Vice President” in a 20-person company may not have had the breadth of exposure a “Director” has in a 5,000-person organization.

Multiple hats vs. specialized. The context of a candidate’s role in regard to the breadth of the responsibilities covered and how many people are impacted can also make a difference. In a small organization, a person could easily cover many areas that in a larger organization are covered by separate people or departments. As an example, in human resources, a “manager” in a small company may handle general issues related to benefits and compensation, some recruiting and some training, but the functions of managing benefits programs, payroll, recruiting or training materials development may be functions that are actually outsourced. In a large company, a manager of human resources may have separate staff for recruiting, benefits and payroll, and training could be handled by an entirely separate department.

Broad vs. deep. As I previously described, the actual functional areas a person covers can vary dramatically in many sectors. In accounting and finance, the role of “finance manager” can mean very different things. A small company may have a “controller” who handles everything from A/R, A/P and journal entries to payroll and taxes. In a large company, a “finance manager” could be someone who analyzes a very specific area of business to determine how to reduce costs or streamline operations. The skills of a “controller” in a small company, does not necessarily trump the skills or expertise of a “finance manager” in a larger company.

Senior vs. junior (years or skill level?). It’s interesting to see how the word “senior” added to a title reflects different years/levels of experience in different industries. There are some marketing roles that include “senior” and indicate the role requires 3 to 4 years of experience, where in many other sectors, 3 to 4 years of experience would be considered junior. Senior-level project managers can reflect anywhere from 5 to 15 years of experience, depending on their subject matter or project deliverables. In science, using “senior” may reflect 20+ years of experience for someone with an undergraduate degree, yet someone with a PhD and 8 years of experience may qualify for a “director-” level role (higher than senior scientist) that the “senior” with 20 years of experience will not be competitive for.

In science organizations, support roles are often filled by people that have a strong understanding of the technical functions of the people they support, although it may not be a requirement. Heightened awareness of the business focus, the vocabulary and the personalities involved, will certainly help contribute to the development of successful relationships and increase perceived value.

The examples I have described are intended to serve as a means of comparison and not absolutes. It is critical for candidates and employers to ask sound questions of each other. From the candidate's perspective, being successful in a new role can pivot on whether you fully comprehend what is really expected of you. Asking enough questions in advance to learn what the employer's expectations are will help set you up for success. From the employer's perspective, it is critical to ask questions that require a candidate to articulate experiences that truly illustrate they can produce what you need. Understanding the context of what you're getting or what is needed is critical to the success of the relationship.

Sherri Edwards has led Resource Maximizer since 1997, empowering individuals to find rewarding work and businesses to build better workplaces. She offers coaching services for individuals pursuing a career change or those needing guidance in moving their careers to the next level. Her clients learn how to identify their workplace demand and value, and how to market themselves effectively to obtain the type of work that fuels their passions and allows them to live their dreams.

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"Empowering people to find rewarding work and build dynamic work places."

Upcoming events



AWIS EVENTS

All AWIS events are free and held the third Wednesday of the month in the Pelton Auditorium, which is located in the Thomas Bldg of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center (see [map](#)). Parking is free. The event starts at 6:00 PM. From 6:00-6:30 we have networking time accompanied with food and wine. Then the talk/panel runs from 6:30-7:30 PM. We then have dessert and more networking until 8:00 PM.

All are welcome, no need to be a member.

MAY

May 20, 2015: Professional Development Workshop - Rhonda Rhyne, CEO, Provencio, Inc.

JUNE

June 17th, 6-10pm: AWIS Annual Banquet, celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Chapter. The Banquet will take place at The Landing at Northcut. It is a formal attire event that will begin at 6pm with a pre-dinner reception. Dinner will be served buffet style and during the course of the evening we will hear talks from each award recipient, as well as participate in the annual scholarship awards ceremony. Purchase tickets [here](#)

OTHER LOCAL EVENTS

MAY

May 15-17th, 2015 Puget Sound Women Chemists Retreat. It will be held from at the Pack Forest Conference Center in Eatonville, WA. The retreat is open to graduate, post-doctoral and early-career chemists. Sign up and see further information [here](#).

May 30th, 2015, 9 AM to 6 PM. Symposium in Memory of B. S. Rabinovitch, at Department of Chemistry, University of Washington. To commemorate Prof. Rabinovitch, there will be a series of talks. Six of the invited speakers are members of the National Academy of Sciences and one is a Nobel Prize winner,

JUNE

June 19th, 6:30-10:30 pm: NWABR's Annual Life Science Research Gala at the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI), Seattle. More information [here](#).

Announcements and Opportunities

THIRD ANNUAL AWARD BANQUET FOR SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT AND EARLY CAREER ACHIEVEMENT

In June 2015 Seattle AWIS will hold its 3rd Annual Award Banquet for Scientific Advancement and Early Career Achievement. The event is dedicated to extraordinary accomplishments of two inspiring female scientists from the Puget Sound area. The event is also Seattle AWIS's primary fundraiser for undergraduate STEM scholarships awarded to women attending universities in Washington State. This year we will be honoring Dr. Julie Overbaugh with the Award for Scientific Advancement and Dr. Brandi Cossairt with the Award for Early Career Achievement. For more information [contact us](#)

SEATTLE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES IN SCHOOLS

1) The Hazel Wolf K-8 STEM School in Seattle is having several outreach events where they could use your help. Contact Christine Benita E-STEM Program Coordinator, Hazel Wolf K-8 E-STEM School [206-252-3586](tel:206-252-3586)

- Science Fair Mentoring for the Middle School: Fridays, May 1st, 8th, and 15th, after school 3:30-4:30. Work one-on-one to help edit and support middle school students as they compile their data for the Science Fair.
- Science Fair Judging: May 28th 9 a.m.-1 p.m. The 6th graders are entering projects for the district competition. Assistance needed to judge these projects.
- E-STEM Celebration and Ice Cream Social: May 28th 6:30-8:00 p.m. We invite community partners to table an informational session at one of our most popular evening events.

2) The 2015 NWABR Student Bio Expo is seeking for judge volunteers for their Science Fair.

If you would like to sign up we would really appreciate your participation, please sign up using this Expo Judge Registration link:

<http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07eamlj9hei6n7lbih/start>

Requirements:

Pre-Judging meeting Monday May 11th 6pm – 8pm Agora Conference Room, Adaptive Biotechnologies, 1551 Eastlake Ave East, Seattle, WA 98102

The Expo Judging will take place at the Expo on Wednesday May 27th 2015 at Shoreline Community College from 8am – 1pm

The Expo Categories and Judging criteria have remained the same for 2015 – these can be viewed here: <https://app.box.com/s/g7eaboi64ppaq7gis2el>

Call for Volunteers for Life Science Innovation Northwest (LSINW) June 30-July 1

The Washington Biotechnology & Biomedical Association is looking for a few good volunteers for our Life Science Innovation Northwest (LSINW). Ideally, volunteers should have an interest in life sciences, healthcare, research or science in general and can serve at least one, 4 hour shift doing the following:

- Providing directions
- Being helpful
- Writing recaps of LSINW Panels and Podium Presentations
- Serving as a member of our Social Media Team
- Exhibiting a professional, courteous manner

All instructions regarding duties and locations will be provided, and complimentary food and beverages are available for the hours corresponding with your work shift. Volunteers are also provided access to the conference for an equal number of hours worked. This is an excellent opportunity for senior citizens, retired healthcare professionals or college students who are interested in science, math, engineering, or biomedicine.

If you are interested in volunteering at the 2015 conference, email Melissa Keough at execasst@washbio.org by April 30, 2015.

Seattle AWIS is seeking donation for its 2015 scholarship program which will be awarded in June 2015

Please use our DONATE button on our [Scholarship Program Webpage](#) to donate directly or send a check to our Seattle AWIS Scholarship Committee Chair.

Checks should be made payable to: Seattle AWIS Scholarship Fund
Seattle AWIS Scholarship Committee Chair
5805 16th Avenue NE
Seattle, WA 98105

The Seattle AWIS scholarship program was launched in 1990 to provide financial assistance to undergraduate women who are majoring in science, math or engineering fields at four-year colleges and universities in Washington State. More than \$175,000 in scholarships have been awarded since then. Scholarship recipients are selected based on academic excellence, financial need, motivation to pursue a science-based career, and a record of giving back to their communities. Many scholarship recipients have found that receiving an AWIS scholarship is validating and gives them increased self-confidence to go for their dreams and goals and that this support from a group of women whom they admire is as important as the financial support.

Become an AWIS Committee Chair next year!

You are invited to share your talents, expand your network of colleagues and help make AWIS a terrific organization! We are looking for officers and committee (co-)chairs to serve July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016. By virtue of being a committee (co-)chair, you also become a Board member. Beyond the time required for fulfilling committee tasks, the Board time is minimal with meetings once every two months.

We have nine committees that function year round to provide programs that inform and support our members and connect us to each other and the community. Each of the committees recruit volunteers to help plan and execute their tasks. Being a committee chair will bring personal rewards including the pleasure of working with talented women in diverse science careers and providing leadership opportunities that will enhance your skills and your resume.

COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR OPPORTUNITIES

Events – plans and facilitates monthly programs September through June and quarterly networking and social events

Newsletter – prepares a quarterly electronic newsletter

Website – updates our chapter webpage with current chapter and community activities

Membership – handles chapter-only memberships, volunteer recruitment and sends out chapter announcements

Publicity – sends chapter activity information to community and professional organizations and social media

Scholarship – publicizes, fundraises and selects undergraduate women in STEM to receive scholarships

Mentoring Program – organizes our peer mentoring program which matches mentors and mentees into small groups for meetings October through June

GEMS – organizes and mentors middle school girls at monthly activity meetings
October through May
Banquet and Awards – plans, fundraises and executes our annual chapter
banquet in June and publicizes and selects women scientists to be honored at the
banquet

View this flyer for more details [here](#)

Voting for the new officers and committee chairs will take place in June.
If you are interested in being an officer or (co-)chairing a committee or desire more
information, contact Reitha Weeks at reithaweeks@gmail.com by May 15th.

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