

The August meeting of AWIS Chicago at El Jardin Cafe was called to order at 7:20PM on Aug. 14th. The following individuals were present at the meeting: Heather Behanna (President), Silvia Novelli (VP Public Relations), Theresa Peterson (VP Programs), Beth Schubert (VP Membership), Joy Ramos (VP Service), Sandy Pearce, Meghan Anzels.

The next meeting will be held on Sept. 11th, 2006 and organized by Annette Gilchrist (VP Communications).

The first order of business was website improvements. The group agreed that Silvia could revise the website's design as she deemed fit, without prior approval from the board. And if comments or complaints came up, then the design can be revised accordingly. Mini-interviews with people from different scientific backgrounds will be posted. Theresa's previous advisor agreed to be interviewed by her. Sandy Pearce, from Abbott, agreed to be interviewed by Heather on job interviewing, etc.

The second order of business was organizing the year's projects. AWIS Chicago's theme for the year is Gender Bias and Equality. To draw in as many current and new members as possible, a big, social event is planned for early October, instead of late September, to allow for maximum planning/marketing. Theresa will meet with the owner of the Signature Room at the Hancock to ask about having a private room for AWIS and what the costs would be. It was suggested that non-members can sign-up for AWIS at the event itself and get discounted/free entry. Sandy mentioned that Abbott sponsors AWIS memberships for their employees. Other ideas included reserving "Spirit Cruises" (Navy Pier) for 2-3 hours, inclusive of food, entertainment, or Jazz nights on Tuesdays at the Museum of Contemporary Art. Heather also suggested cocktails/drinks at Adobo Grill followed by a show at 2nd City. Theresa will try to get sponsorship from a venture capitalist she knows to help fund this first event or just AWIS Chicago, in general. Theresa and Heather will coordinate with each other and have things finalized by the end of the month. Heather will contact Katie to ask about sponsorship.

The next event will be a panel discussion on how to start-up your own business, featuring 3-4 people to be contacted by Annette Gilchrist. This will be held in late October/early November. Possible venues would be university auditoriums, to minimize cost. U. of Chicago or UIC was suggested since these are more centrally located. Heather will look into U. of Chicago's facilities and possible sponsorship.

The next BIG event will be a talk featuring a well-known figure in gender bias/equality issues. Theresa will contact Nancy Hopkins and Ben Barres and see when they will be available. Heather will contact AWIS Baltimore to see if they paid Nancy Hopkins when she was their guest speaker. It was suggested that a local scientist be invited as well and give a smaller talk at the beginning. Meghan will contact her previous advisor, Jeffrey Malow, a professor from Loyola, who's done gender studies in physics. A possible venue would be a hotel with a reception afterwards. Sandy also provided a short list of national meetings to be held in Chicago, the biggest of which is ACS (in the spring) as a possible source of prominent speakers to invite.

Joy talked briefly about service opportunities, informing the group that participation in Chicago's upcoming Science Week in late September, will be harder to organize since most groups have finalized plans already. She is still following up with a couple of groups who may need resource speakers for café-style science talks. She suggested one outreach activity per quarter and she will send out information about it on the listserv, as outreach opportunities come up.

The question about AWIS' logo/slogan came up and Heather said she liked "AWIS can" as suggested from last month's meeting. Meghan will see if the image of "Rosie the riveter" is copyrighted. Once finalized, we can have t-shirts printed with it and possibly get sponsorship from Fisher, etc.

By the next meeting on Sept. 11th, the details for the first social event should be finalized. The speakers for the smaller panel and the big talk should also be finalized.

Smaller, more informal group activities were suggested to increase interaction among AWIS members. Heather suggested a running club that could meet twice a month, once in the northside and once in the southside. Another idea was to meet for free yoga/pilates class at Millennium Park on a weekend morning followed by breakfast/coffee afterwards. Other sports could be included, too. Beth suggested wine tasting at Lenford Winery near Roselle, IL.

The management of the listserv was also discussed since it's been difficult to post messages. Heather will contact the current listserv manager for the e-mail addresses of subscribers and subscribe them to a YahooGroups she's created for AWIS. Once active, members can post announcements on the bulletin board (like need a tennis partner, etc).

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15PM.