



# Forum in Focus

SPRING 2004

## President's Letter

Dear Forum Members,

The Forum is having an outstanding year thanks to our enthusiastic members, our hardworking board and many successful events. We are fortunate to be able to educate our membership about the city's biomedical jewel as well as organize fundraising opportunities for Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research (SFBR). Meanwhile, we, the membership, are all reaping the rewards in the process.

We began the year with our Forum sponsored Student Tours of SFBR, coordinated by **Julie Whitaker** and **Karen Kalter**, which is a program we offer to area high schools. Advanced science students from 10 areas schools were able to see one of the world's leading independent biomedical research facilities first-hand and have an opportunity to speak with scientists about careers in biosciences. Many thanks to our Forum volunteer hostesses, the Foundation staff members and the scientists, all who contributed time and effort to this important program.

March was a busy month for the Forum! On March 10, we hosted the SFBR Evening Tour, chaired by **Phyllis Viola** and **Melinda Young**. Members and their guests enjoyed a welcome from SFBR President Dr. Frank F. Ledford, Jr., a delicious cocktail buffet by Don Strange and informative tours through the laboratories. In addition, Foundation scientists intrigued us with highlights



**Lisa Sechler**

of their current research projects. A special thank you to **Ann Lakey-Reeks**, our chairs and the scientists for all of their time and talents that made this evening such a success.

Later in the month, on March 24, we held our Spring Lecture Lunch at The Argyle. Another record crowd gathered to hear **Dr. Deborah Neigut** and **Gigi Gross** speak on "Food, Fads and Facts." Everyone was very interested to learn about nutrition and how today's diets affect our bodies. We are grateful to President-elect **Francie Calgaard** and her assistant **Tricia Steves** for bringing us this informative and delicious luncheon.

Our Annual Science Education Awards were announced at our Spring Lecture Luncheon. Area high schools competed for grants from the Forum and the **V.H. McNutt Foundation**. Congratulations to **Ronnie Kirchhof**, a teacher at Samuel Clemens High School, who received first place, and **Audra Hall**,

also a teacher at Clemens along with **Joseph F. Stuller, III** of Cibolo Alternative Program who tied for second place!

In addition, each school that entered received a special monetary award from the **L.D. Ormsby Foundation**. Thank you to the Foundation scientists, **Mrs. Valerie Guenther** of the V.H. McNutt Foundation and **Jane VandeBerg**, all who judged our awards. We extend special thanks to **Estee Kellogg** and **Joy Fuhrmann** for organizing the awards process.

And now we are all getting excited about our upcoming Gala "Broadway Lights" chaired by **Christy Gulley**, **Jill Rosenthal** and **Debbi Chesney**. This night to remember will be held at The Argyle on Saturday, May 1. The dedicated Gala committee assures this will be an incredible evening filled with gaming, dancing, prizes and superb cuisine. Join us for a Gala you won't want to miss! By attending, you are supporting SFBR's future research and, in doing so, you will have a wonderful time. See you there!

The Southwest Foundation Forum is so fortunate to have such a loyal membership. Your attendance and support at our events furthers our mission and ensures our continued success. Thanks to each of you who help us achieve this!

Gratefully,

*Lisa*

# Evening Tour Bids Farewell to SFBR President

The Forum hosted its annual tour of the Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research (SFBR) on Wednesday, March 10, 2004. This event is always special and this year it was even more special as it was the last tour for SFBR President **Dr. Frank F. Ledford, Jr.** before his retirement.

**Don Strange** catered a delicious cocktail reception for members and guests, which was followed by remarks by Dr. Ledford and Forum President **Lisa Sechler**.

Guests then divided into four groups and received an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of our city's biomedical jewel. Prestigious scientists **Dr. Anthony G. Commuzzie**, **Dr. K. Dee Carey** and **Dr. Rebeca Rico-Hesse** shared time with each group and one of the highlights of the tour was a visit to the newly renovated Cardiovascular Genomics Laboratory with **Dr. Laura Cox**.

The evening was an inspirational and informative time for members and guests. Special thanks to **Ann Lakey-Reeks** for her devoted support to the Forum in making this tour a success.



## ***Sechler Recognized with Leadership Award***

Southwest Foundation Forum President **Lisa Sechler** will be honored with a "Profiles in Leadership" Award on May 21, 2004, at a breakfast at the Bright Shawl.

Sponsored by the Mission City Business and Professional Women (BPW), "Profiles in Leadership" recognizes the often unheralded contributions of some of San Antonio's most dedicated volunteers. Lisa's countless hours of unpaid volunteer work for the Southwest Foundation Forum – among numerous other organizations – made her the perfect candidate for this prestigious award. One of the amazing things about Lisa is that she gives so freely of her time and expertise while raising three little boys!

If you are interested in purchasing an individual ticket or a table for the breakfast, please contact Mission City BPW President Sonora Hartley at [sonora@satx.rr.com](mailto:sonora@satx.rr.com) for more information.

Lisa, many thanks for all you do for the Forum. We are so proud of your honor.



# Science Award Recipients Reap Big Rewards

Each year, the Forum works in conjunction with the **V.H McNutt Memorial Foundation** to recognize outstanding science programs in the San Antonio area. As co-sponsors of the Science Awards, monetary prizes are presented to the initiatives that best promote scientific learning in high school. In addition to the winners, every school that participates is given an award by the **L.D. Ormsby Foundation**.

In February, representatives from the Forum and Valerie Guenther, representing the V.H. McNutt Memorial Foundation, met with a panel of judges from Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research (SFBR) to select the winners. This year's judges included **Jane VandeBerg** and scientists **Dr. Laura Cox** and **Dr. Timothy Anderson** from the Genetics Department. **Ann Lakey-Reeks**, the Forum's SFBR liaison, coordinated the Science Awards and assisted in the final decision. Collectively, the group decided to award one first-place winner and two second-place winners this year.

The first place \$5,000 winner was **Ronnie Kirchhof**, a teacher at **Clemens High School**. The grant will be used for his study of aquatic biology where his students will study a number of watersheds. In addition, he will teach the students about the effects of human population growth on the resource of water. The class will study aquatic organisms, pollution and the effects they have on humans. Kirchhof and his students will look specifically at the effects of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides on the growth and development of frog eggs. He will test for both the effects of pH levels on the growth and development of *Daphnia* and/or brine shrimp and the effects of nitrate and phosphate levels on aquatic algae and/or plant growth. Furthermore, the class will



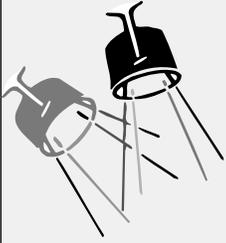
look at the human impact on local watersheds, such as disturbance of natural habitat, pollution and waste products. Kirchhof's first place winnings will serve to advance his students' knowledge in the study of aquatic biology.

Due to the strength of two of the applicants, there was an unprecedented tie for second place. **Joseph F. Stuller, III**, a teacher at **Cibolo Alternative Program** and **Audra Hall**, a teacher at **Clemens High School** will each receive \$3,250 for their initiatives. Joseph Stuller's grant will fund his aquaponics and hydroponics study. His class will collect samples from Cibolo Creek to investigate the flow rates and water levels including pH, dissolved oxygen, nitrates and ammonium. In addition, Stuller will integrate this science research with the students' math and English curriculum.

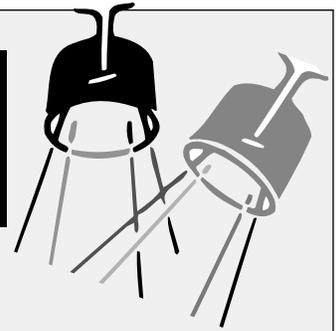
Audra Hall of Clemens High School will use the grant money

to fund her physic and chemistry unit on electricity. With the award money, Audra's students will learn about the technology of electricity and power by learning to wire simple home circuits. Through this study, she wants to impart both an interest in science for higher education and a practical and technical understanding of circuitry for future homeowners.

The Forum congratulates each of the 2004 Science Education Award winners and thanks the many participants. We especially appreciate the continued support and sponsorship of the V.H. McNutt Foundation, as well as Valerie Guenther's generous donation of her time and commitment to the Science Education Awards. We also extend our sincere appreciation to the L.D. Ormsby Foundation for their continued partnership and funding of the participatory awards.



# Broadway Lights Comes to San Antonio



On Saturday, May 1, the 33rd Annual Southwest Foundation Forum Gala, *Broadway Lights*, will be held at The Argyle. The evening will feature dancing to the sounds of Big Time (who entertained the guests at President George W. Bush's Inauguration), gaming, cocktails and The Argyle's fabulous cuisine.

In addition, attendance prizes will be awarded and guests will be able to purchase raffle tickets. The following are a list of the raffle prizes, so go ahead and stock up on those raffle tickets. At \$10 each, it's worth buying several to get a better chance at winning one of these fabulous prizes. Special thanks to our generous donors for making these prizes possible.

## **New York City**

This trip for two to the Big Apple includes roundtrip airline tickets, two-night stay at the Marriott Marquis, an insider's tour of Wall Street and tickets to a Broadway show.

*Courtesy of Fuhrmann Group of Merrill Lynch  
and Anthony Sandoval of Best Tickets*

## **San Antonio Theatre Night**

Pretend like you're an out-of-town visitor and enjoy an evening on the Riverwalk. This package includes tickets for two to the *42nd Street* performance at The Majestic Theatre on June 4, one-night stay at the Marriott Rivercenter or Riverwalk Hotel, dinner for two at either the Little Rhein Steak House or Fig Tree Restaurant and Sunday brunch at Biga on the Banks.

*Courtesy of Ginger and Dick Lord, Marriott Rivercenter Hotel,  
Fig Tree Restaurant, Little Rhein Steak House and Biga on the Banks*

## **Pack Your Bags and Go**

Pack your brand new, seven-piece collection of Jon Hart luggage and go anywhere Southwest Airlines flies!

*Courtesy of Southwest Airlines and Jon Hart Design Co.*

## **Be Bedazzled and Bejeweled**

Be the recipient of a Bejeweled multi-strand semi-precious gem necklace with matching bracelet and chandelier earrings. This one-of-a-kind set was created with rubies, rose quartz, chalcedony and crystals.

*Designed Exclusively and Donated by Carroll Dorsey Walker, Bejeweled*

## **A Special Night Out**

You and seven of your closest friends will enjoy a memorable dinner at The Argyle.

*Courtesy of The Argyle*

## **"Pamper Me" Party**

Pamper yourself and three friends with deluxe make-overs by an Armani makeup artist in the Private Suite at The 5th Avenue Club. Refreshments are provided.

*Courtesy of The 5th Avenue Club  
at Saks Fifth Avenue*

## **A Relaxing Evening for Two**

You and your better half will enjoy a romantic night stay and two 50-minute spa treatments at San Antonio's newest five-star hotel.

*Courtesy of The Watermark Hotel & Spa*

## **Family Shopping Extravaganza**

This family-shopping extravaganza provides gift certificates to everyone's favorite stores!

*Courtesy of Satel's, Andie & Barbara,  
Allie G's and Keedo's*

## **Mexican Fiesta**

Viva Fiesta! You'll be the talk of the town when you organize this three-course dinner (appetizers, entrees and dessert) for 20 people in the Private Dining Room.

*Courtesy of Paloma Blanca Mexican Cuisine*

## **Harley-Davidson Mania**

Dream of learning to ride a motorcycle? Dream no more. This prize includes motorcycle school, a motorcycle outfit and two weeks use of a Harley-Davidson so you can show off your new techniques.

*Courtesy of Alamo City Harley-Davidson*

The following are tantalizing attendance prizes, all of which were donated by special friends. We are most grateful to the generous donors.

Handtufted 5' x 8' rug handcrafted in India made from 100% Wool Pile. <i>Courtesy of Oriental Rug Gallery of Texas</i>	Beaded Ear Posts with Drop Pearl, 1½ inches long, 14K gold <i>Courtesy of James Avery Craftsman, Inc.</i>	10" x 14" portrait and sitting fee <i>Courtesy of Langmore Photography</i>	Silver Leonardo Travel Cocktail Bag for Two <i>Courtesy of Sloan/Hall</i>	\$250 Gift Certificate <i>Courtesy of Tootsies</i>	One-week use of Saab <i>Courtesy of Ken Batchelor Cadillac Saab Hummer</i>	Texas Gift Basket and Steak Night for six at Waring General Store <i>Courtesy of Don Strange of Texas, Inc. and Don Strange Ranch</i>
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Through the years, more than \$2 million dollars has been donated by the Forum to fund pilot studies at SFBR. Since 1999, scientists who have received seed monies from the Forum have been able to apply for federal grants and to other granting organizations that have resulted in more than \$8 million dollars for SFBR. Clearly, the impact of the Forum's fundraising efforts through the Gala is a valuable component in furthering SFBR's life-saving research.

Please come and support the SFBR as well as treat yourself to a fabulous night on Broadway.

If you have any questions or wish to make a donation please call: Christy Gulley, 210.822.6526, Jill Rosenthal, 210.930.5455 or Debbi Chesney, 824.5118.

## BROADWAY LIGHTS TABLE SPONSORS

### Front Row

The Capital Group  
Companies / American Funds  
Loeffler, Jonas & Tuggey

### Orchestra

Claudia Huntington and  
Marshall Miller  
Ernst & Young  
USAA  
Wendy and Tom Wirth  
The Dreeben, Gorman and  
Sullivan Families  
SBC

### Balcony

Stanley Rosenberg  
Southwest Foundation for  
Biomedical Research (2)  
Austin, Calvert & Flavin, Inc.  
Nancy and Jeff Moorman  
Cox and Smith, Inc.  
Frost Bank  
La Mansion del Rio Hotel  
Budweiser/BudCo, Ltd.  
Margery Block  
Caroline and Larry Walker,  
*San Antonio Express-News*  
R.L. Worth and  
Associates / Hurd Urban  
Development  
L.D. Ormsby Charitable  
Foundation, Inc.  
Tesoro  
Susan and John Kerr

## Gala Prize Donors

Accents	The Dominion Country Club	Oriental Photography
Adelante	Don Strange of Texas, Inc.	Studios / Paul Overstreet
Aladdin Cleaning and Restoration	Don Strange Ranch	Painted Pony
Allie G's	El Jarro de Arturo	Paloma Blanca
Amy's Ice Cream	El Mirador Restaurant	Mexican Cuisine
Andie & Barbara	EZ's	The Peach Tree Restaurant
The Argyle	Fiesta Texas	Pioneer Flour Mills
Art, Inc.	The Flower Forest	Racquetball & Fitness Clubs
The Barn Door Restaurant	Frontier Enterprises	Radisson Hill Country Resort & Spa
Nancy Barnes Custom Belt Buckles	The Fuhrmann Group of Merrill Lynch	Ric Marmolejo
Best Tickets, courtesy of Anthony Sandoval	Gruene Hall	Rivercenter Comedy Club
Biga on the Banks	Alamo City Harley-Davidson	The 5th Avenue Club @ Saks Fifth Avenue
Bill Smith Photography	James Avery Craftsmen, Incorporated	San Antonio Children's Museum
Billy T's Burgers	J. Mooney Galleries	San Antonio Marriott Rivercenter and Riverwalk Hotel
Blue Star Brewing Company Restaurant & Bar	John-William Interiors	San Antonio Missions
Bolner's Fiesta Products, Inc.	Jon Hart Design Co.	Satel's
Boudro's	Julie's Monogram Place, Inc.	SBC
BudCo, Ltd. / Budweiser	Keedo's	Sea Island Shrimp House
Canyon Café	Ken Batchelor Cadillac Saab Hummer	Sloan/Hall
Carroll Dorsey Walker for Bejeweled	Kraft Cleaners	Southwest Airlines
Casa Rio	La Fogata	Spurs Foundation
Champions Sports Bar Restaurant	Mexican Cuisine	Sugarplum Dreams
Champps Restaurant & Bar	La Fonda Oak Hills	Superlatives
Cheesy Jane's	Langmore Photography	Tapatio Springs
Chester's Hamburgers	Little Rhein Steak House or Fig Tree Restaurant	Teka Molino
C.H. Guenther & Sons	The Lodge of Castle Hills	Texas Rangers
Cleaning Ideas Corp.	Ginger and Dick Lord	Thousand Oaks Racquet Club
The Club at Sonterra	Los Barrios	Tootsies
Cody-Harris Photography	Luxor Jewelers, Inc.	University Bowl
Colette Edwards	Maggie's	Verizon Wireless Amphitheater
Cory Stephens Photography	The Magnolia Pancake Haus	The Watermark Hotel & Spa
Cottage Chicks	Malibu Grand Prix and Malibu Castle	Witte Museum
Crumpets Restaurant	Mary Benedum	Zio's Italian Kitchen
Culpepper Cleaners	Massina Hof Winery	
	Oak Park Cleaners	

# 2003 Gala Raffle Winners Enjoy Memorable Trip

The band had just finished their set and you could hear the clinking of plates as they were cleared from the table at last year's Gala at The Argyle. The raffle ticket purchasers were anxiously waiting to hear their name called for the amazing prizes. **Kathy and Albert Biedenharn** were visiting with friends when their name was called as the winners of the **New Orleans package**, which included airline tickets, two-night hotel accommodations, Jon Hart luggage, dinners at some of the city's finest dining establishments and a handful of admission tickets to various museums and cultural centers.

Although they were excited about winning a trip to New Orleans where they were married 18 years ago, it wasn't until they inspected the details of the package that they realized the accommodations provided, the **John James Audubon cottages** at the **Maison de Ville**, where they had married.

Needless to say, they were ecstatic and overwhelmed with a feeling of fate. Because their anniversary was coming up in October, they decided to plan a romantic weekend for this celebratory occasion.

Kathy called the hotel to make the reservations and was compelled to share her story with the reservation agent. This person passed on the information to the general manager who decided to make this trip as special as possible for this lucky couple. When Kathy and Albert arrived at the hotel, they were graciously escorted to the courtyard area of the Audubon cottages and led to their anniversary cottage.

"It was amazing," said Kathy. "The cottage was charming and the originality had been well-maintained. The cottage we stayed in was certainly more than the hotel's original donation and we were overwhelmed. The entire staff knew of our wedding in the courtyard among the Audubon cottages 18 years ago and they did everything they could to ensure our happiness. It was an incredible second honeymoon!"

The Biedenharn's enjoyed dinner at Arnaud's, a brunch at Brennan's and lunch at Commander's

Palace, all of which were included in the package. Because the hotel experience was so wonderful, they also dined at The Bistro, the restaurant within the hotel, and were equally impressed.

"The Bistro was a real culinary experience. The food was delicious and even the Chef came to visit us during our meal," said Kathy. The Biedenharn's were so enamored

with the food, they bought the restaurant's cookbook with the hopes of duplicating the culinary experience in their own home to conjure up the wonderful memories.

Because the Biedenharn's two-night stay was not long enough to take advantage of everything that the city so generously donated, they decided to share the kindness with the hotel staff who had ensured their second honeymoon was picture perfect. A house-keeper received tickets to the Zoo and admitted to having never taken her grandchildren there. A doorman received tickets to a museum and he was overflowing with appreciation. The package even included a group party in Mardi Gras town, which the Biedenharn's gifted to the general manager who said he would organize a party for his top staff members to enjoy!

"We knew the Maison de Ville was a special hotel years ago, but it is even more wonderful now," said Kathy. "We'll definitely be buying raffle tickets again this year, because we believe!"

*For information on purchasing tickets to the Gala and raffle tickets, please call **Christy Gulley** at **210.822.6526**.*

*"We'll definitely be buying raffle tickets again this year, because we believe!"*

# A Nutritious Spring Lecture Luncheon



The Southwest Foundation Forum hosted the Spring Lecture Luncheon at The Argyle on Wednesday, March 24. **Dr. Deborah Neigt** and **GiGi Gross**, staff members at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, spoke to the sold out audience on “Food, Fads and Facts.” The lecture provided Forum members and their guests with a better understanding of nutritional and dietary needs.



Thanks to each of who attended. The Forum is grateful for your continued support.



## SFBR TOUR CONTINUES TO CAPTIVATE STUDENTS

Students from 10 area high schools including **Keystone School**, **John Jay** and **Southside** had the special opportunity to tour the Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research (SFBR) campus this past January, February and March. Because of the overwhelming number of applications received from advanced placement high school classes this year, the Forum extended the tour to one more school – while eight schools remained on the wait list!

Each week about 30 students from a school receive a fascinating two-hour tour which included an introductory video about the SFBR and a visit to the SBC Genomics Computing Center, the world’s largest computing cluster devoted to statistical genetic analysis. Students are then taken by bus on a

tour of the grounds, which included a close-up look at the Southwest National Primate Research Center, one of only eight such centers in the country. It is here where the students were entertained and enthralled by the chimpanzees, many of who gave Oscar-winning performances for the students!

The visit concluded with an informal lecture by a scientist who spoke on a specific topic such as genetics, virology or veterinary medicine. Each group of students was inspired and presented thoughtful and insightful questions for the new and gracious SFBR guide, **Amy Abdalla**, as well as the scientists.

Many thanks to all the SFBR scientists who graciously donated their



time and talent to inspire San Antonio’s high school students – **Dr. Laura Almay**, **Dr. Tim Anderson**, **Dr. Laura Cox**, **Dr. David Martin**, **Dr. Susan Mooberry**, **Dr. Greg Patterson** and **Dr. Jeff Rogers**.

And thanks to **Ann Lakey-Reeks** and **Amy** for helping coordinate the tours as well as Forum members who generously volunteered their time to be a hostess – **Francie Calgaard**, **Debbi Chesney**, **Susan Heinemeyer**, **Karen Heydenreich**, **Heather Hunter**, **Laura Moorman**, **Jill Rosenthal**, **Lisa Sechler** and **Tricia Steves**.

## ***Can Opossums Teach Us How to Repair Spinal Cord Injuries?***

Spinal cord injury is damage to the spinal cord that results in the loss of function such as mobility or feeling. Frequent causes of damage are trauma, such as car accidents, gunshot wounds, falls or diseases, such as polio and spina bifida.

Approximately 450,000 people live with spinal cord injury in the U.S. There are about 10,000 new spinal cord injuries every year. Currently, there is no cure for spinal cord injuries, although there have been many advances resulting in a decrease in damage by the prevention of swelling at the injury site.

**Dr. Brad Wang**, in the department of Genetics, has recently submitted a grant to the National Institutes of Health in which he proposes to use the laboratory opossum, *Monodelphis domestica*, as a model for spinal cord injury. Humans and other placental mammals are never capable of regenerating spinal cord after injury, however, the opossum has this capability up until seven days after birth, to a lesser extent from seven to 10 days after birth and no capability at 10 days. Dr. Wang's preliminary studies have led to the discovery of a gene in opossums that is switched off eight days after birth,

simultaneously with loss of the spinal cord's ability to regenerate after injury. Interestingly, this same gene exists in humans.

Dr. Wang's study will facilitate research on the molecular mechanisms involved. Ultimately, if it were possible to prevent this gene from being switched off, or to turn it back on, it might be possible to reverse the damage of spinal cord injuries and the finality involved in many of their prognoses.

### **Annual Forum Membership Drive in Full Swing**

The Forum's membership drive commenced during Spring Break by direct mail and payments are rolling in. If you have not yet renewed, there's still time!

SWFF membership dues are \$30 for a membership or \$50 for a patron-level sponsorship. Checks should be made payable to the Southwest Foundation Forum and mailed to:

**Mrs. T.J. Connolly**  
**4901 Broadway, Suite 231**  
**San Antonio, Texas 78209**

Thank you for your support of the Forum and we look forward to seeing you soon.

***This is also a great time to refer a new member! Call Brooke Connolly at 210.828.4600 for more information.***