



Forum in Focus

WINTER 2007

President's Letter

Dear Forum Members:

Warm wishes to you all for a happy and healthy 2007! I am very excited about the start of a new year for many reasons. If the enthusiasm and attendance of our fall events are indicators of what is to come this year for the Southwest Foundation Forum, 2007 is going to be a record-breaker!



Brooke Connolly

The Foundation Evening Tour, held Wednesday, October 25, 2006, saw the highest attendance ever under the experienced and gracious coordination of **Ann Lakey-Reeks, Meredith Campbell** and **Jodi Wood**. Following a cocktail buffet and welcoming comments from Foundation President and Chairman John C. Kerr, guests heard from a handful of scientists speaking about current research and were able to pose questions on topics ranging from funding to scope of work. The small groups and well-planned presentations made for an informative, thought-provoking experience. Many thanks to Foundation staff members for their hospitality.

Another ever-popular event, the Fall Lecture Luncheon, was held for a sold-out crowd November 15, 2006, at the Argyle, featuring Jean Patterson, Ph.D., chairman of the Department of Virology and Immunology at the Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research. Dr. Patterson spoke eloquently about the very real threat of a 'flu pandemic' and how scientists are working to mitigate the severity of such a phenomenon. Speaking

The purpose of the Southwest Foundation Forum is to support the Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research through community relations, volunteer service and fundraising.

for myself, I admit I was startled by the likelihood of a rapidly spreading disease being transmitted to humans from migrating birds . . . and grateful for those at the Foundation who offer practical advice (use liquid antibacterial on your hands often while traveling) and truthful information. A very special thank you to First Vice President **Allison Zeller** and lecture luncheon assistant **Kristin LeVoyer** for *not* selecting a menu of quail, chicken or pheasant.

Mark your calendars now for the next Lecture Luncheon, planned for March 28, 2007, at the Argyle. Allison and Kristin have invited a well-known local counselor to speak to our group, and we look forward to the added excitement of the Science Education Awards, presented by the V.H. McNutt Foundation and coordinated this year by **Dottie Cooper** and **Lacey Neuhaus Dorn**. Many students who pursue careers in science or research cite their teachers as crucial mentors and supporters and these awards honor those important relationships with financial awards for innovative projects in science education. I know you won't want to miss this very special occasion. Reserve your table on the web at www.swff.org and pay online with a credit card!

Do you know someone who would enjoy learning more about the Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research or supporting its life-changing work? Membership renewal cards will be sent to existing members in April so now is the time to contact Fourth Vice President (Membership) **Laura Moorman**, lmoorman@sbcglobal.net, with your referrals for new members. Many Forum members come to us through their volunteer work on one of our events, so please be a champion for someone you see giving her time to our organization.

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THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

(Continued from Page 1)

The highly anticipated conclusion of our year will be our exquisite Gala to be held at the Argyle on Saturday, May 5, 2007. The theme, "Mystical Living Gardens," conjures up colorful, lush imagery and I feel sure our Gala team will not disappoint. Under the very creative leadership of **Terry Gouger, Jean Mitchell** and **Julie Zacher**, this promises to be a spectacular evening. As you have no doubt heard by now, the Forum donated more gala proceeds than ever before to the Foundation from the Run for the Roses 2006 Gala . . . and I understand the 2007 committee has challenged its members to contribute as much or more following the 2007 Gala! Please support their efforts by buying raffle tickets, contributing to the Gala Grants, or attending the After Party. The Gala Committee began its preparations with a festive kick-off party at the lovely home of Forum Trustee **Suzanne Marlar Dabbous, M.D.**, and I know everyone who attended was impressed by the organized, thorough presentation of materials. Former Forum Trustee Kim Shepperd shared a deeply personal story about how Foundation research has played a role in her life and the lives of her children, inspiring Gala committee members to give generously of their time for an organization conducting research on rare yet devastating diseases, among others better-known to the general public.

Finally, I hope you will join me in thanking John C. Kerr, the Foundation Board Chairman who stepped in to lead the Foundation last summer in the midst of a major personnel change. It is difficult to imagine the amount of time Mr. Kerr has sacrificed to take on the added responsibilities and by all accounts, his efforts have been wildly successful. All of us who share an interest in the sustained growth of the Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research owe him a debt of gratitude.

Many thanks for your support of the Southwest Foundation Forum. I am humbled to be counted among such a dedicated, talented group of women.

Sincerely,



Brooke Connolly
President 2006-2007
Southwest Foundation Forum

Spring Lecture Luncheon

“The Power of Two: The Impact of Relationship”

Please mark your calendars now for the Spring Lecture Luncheon, scheduled for 11 a.m. on

Wednesday, March 28, at The Argyle, where psychologist Theresa Moore will be speaking on “The Power of Two: The Impact of Relationship.”



Theresa Moore

Our culture of abundance is creating an epidemic of loneliness and emptiness. We are the “have it all, do it all” generation. We have earned this place honestly and proudly and actually have more information and options available for our choosing than any other generation before us. So, why the emptiness and loneliness?

We are social beings and everything we do is in relationship to someone or some thing. We all too often go through the motion of relationship and are not genuinely a participant. Ms. Moore will present the impact the lack of genuine relationship has on each of us, as well as making some specific suggestions for being an active participant.

Ms. Moore has been a therapist in the San Antonio community for thirty years and divides her time between her private practice and counselor for the San Antonio Academy. She often addresses groups and speaks on a wide variety of topics from parenting skills to school issues to family matters.

Our Science Education Awards will also be presented at the luncheon so it should be quite an event-filled day! Individual tickets are \$40, or tables of eight are available for \$320. Your check is your reservation. If you need additional information or would like to make your reservation now, please call Allison Zeller at 822-4467 or sign up online at www.swff.org.

Mystical Living Gardens off to a Great Start!

On October 3, 2006 the Gala Committee gathered at the lovely home of **Suzanne Marlar Dabbous** to kick off the planning for the 37th annual gala. The meeting began with a very moving and personal talk by Kim Shepperd about the important impact the research at the Foundation is having on her young family. Knowing that the work the scientists do can make such a difference in the lives of people we know makes all the hard work for the gala that much for rewarding.

This year's gala, "Mystical Living Gardens," will be held at the Argyle on Saturday, May 5, 2007. Chair, **Terry Gouger**, co-chair, **Jean Mitchell** and assistant chair, **Julie Zacher**, are all grateful to the many dedicated volunteers who are committed to organizing a spectacular evening to benefit the Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research. With the marvelous food, challenging games and dancing to the spectacular sounds of "Sauce," an award-winning band out of Austin, it's sure to be an unforgettable night of fun.

This year we have introduced some new committees to help increase the support we give to the scientists. The Centerpiece Sales committee, chaired by **Karel Hoffman** and **Shari Stankey**, will be selling the beautiful table arrangements from the party for \$100. Please contact Karel at 822-0383 should you wish to pre-order one or more of these beautiful centerpieces.

We've also begun a new fundraising idea called "Gala Grants." **Suzanne Marlar Dabbous** and **Allison Zeller** are chairing this promising new committee. Each year, we have a finite amount of tables available to our sold-out gala so many companies are unable to contribute to this very worthy cause. As a result, the Gala Grants committee has mailed hundreds of letters to our community's businesses and professionals asking them to donate to the gala. These "gala grants" will go 100% to the grants that support the scientists. When you consider that, historically, every \$1 in grant money the SWFF has given to the scientists has generated \$20 in government grants, a gift to the Gala Grants gives a great return on an investment. If you would like to make a moderate or more generous contribution to this wonderful new fundraiser, please contact Suzanne at 733-3020.



A stay at the magnificent Hyder House, one of the grandest houses in San Miguel de Allende, is just one of the fabulous packages to be won at the Mystical Living Gardens Gala.

And, continuing the wonderful idea begun last year, the After Party committee, chaired by **Dottie Cooper** and **Sally Sullivan**, is gathering lists of those who are interested in joining the evening's festivities after the dinner has been served. The After Party tickets are \$75 a person and you can join the fun at 9:00 p.m. Come to dance, visit with friends, try your hand at the casino games and enter to win one of the fantastic raffle prizes. Dottie is waiting to add you to the list. Please call 822-8525 to reserve one of the coveted tickets today.

The Raffle committee, chaired by **Marci Hatcher** and **Cathryn LeVrier**, have secured a donation of a stay at the coveted Hyder House in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. This spectacular private home has 10 bedrooms, 12 baths,

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Mystical Living Gardens off to a Great Start!

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a swimming pool, it is decorated with magnificent antiques and includes a full staff. Look for the raffle tickets to go on sale soon and buy yours before the limited tickets are gone.

Terry, Jean and Julie are so grateful to each and every committee member for their hard work and dedication. We all look forward to a great evening at what we hope will be our most successful gala yet.

Mystical Living Gardens Gala Committee

Co-Chairs

Terry Gouger, Jean Mitchell

Assistant Chair

Julie Zacher

Advisors

Estee Kellogg, Caroline Schupbach

Honorary Advisors

Dottie Block, Tena Gorman,
Ruth Eilene Sullivan

After Party

Dottie Cooper, Co-chair
Sally Sullivan, Co-chair
Betsy Baker, Eileene Cochran,
Lee Evans, Kay Maynard,
Kelly Raney, Gloria Steves

Band

Bonnie Gouger

Centerpiece Sales

Karel Hoffman, Co-chair
Shari Stankey, Co-chair
Caroline Decherd, Jenny Gibson,
Leigh Ann King, Kristin LeVoyer,
Carolyn Thornton, Phyllis Viola

Communications

Catherine Comeaux, Chair
Kathryn Dehlinger, Carrie Green,
Laura Zachry

Favors

Karen Heydenreich, Co-chair
Laura Moorman, Co-chair
Paola Lloyd

Fundraising

Suzanne Dabbous, Co-chair
Allison Zeller, Co-chair
Lisa Blonkvist, Courtney Duphorne,
Milby Hartwell, Karen Lee Zachry

Games

Kim Sheppard, Co-chair
Emily Azar, Jill Azar,
Julie Dudley, Margaret Gunn,
Allison Hayne, Melissa Morgan,
Amy White

Invitations

Michele Stevens

Logistics

Melissa Barnett, Co-chair
Mary Beth Mosbacker, Co-chair
Lisa Chegin, Laura Davis,
Tricia Dilling, Nancy Hayne,
Pattie Nield, Carol Oliver,
Mary Potts, Melinda Young

Mailing

Anita Allison, Co-chair
Meredith Campbell, Co-chair
Meg Culp, Jaimee Fulton,
Melinda Hart, Mary Herff,
Jenni Martin, Catherine Matthews,
Julie Miggins, Erika Silva,
Holly Turner

Menu

Audrey Mangold, Julie Whitaker

Public Relations

Anne Heaner

Raffle

Marci Hatcher, Co-chair
Cathryn LeVrier, Co-chair
April Allison, Rachel Allred,
Jenni Curren, Deb Ferguson,
Tifini Furst, Libby Gillespie,
Shannon Gunn, Elizabeth Hale,
Tracy Lewis, Kristen Little,
Heather Snow

Table Sales

Anne Johnston, Co-chair
Jodi Wood, Co-chair
Joan Bailey, Carolyn French,
Christy Meador, Lisa Spielhagen,
Tracy Williams

Treasurer

Lynn Berryman, Chair
Martha Smith

Mystical Living Gardens Donors to Date

Platinum Orchid

AT&T Inc.

Gold Rose

Claudia Huntington and Marshall Miller

Silver Iris

HEB

Mays Family Foundation
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Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research

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Wendy Wirth Stieren

Special thanks to Saks Fifth Avenue for donating the favors to this year's gala!



New biosensors from the blood of llamas

An unusual protein found in the blood of llamas has enabled scientists to develop a quick, simple method for making antibodies that could be used in a new generation of biosensors. The biosensors could detect deliberate environmental contamination with a wide range of disease-causing microbes and toxins, with new sensors produced quickly in response to newly emerging biothreats, researchers said.

Dr. Andrew Hayhurst of the Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research and Dr. Ellen R. Goldman of the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory described their research in a report in the Dec. 1 issue of *Analytical Chemistry*, a semi-monthly journal produced by the American Chemical Society.

Llamas, they point out, are among certain animals (camels and sharks

being the others) that produce heavy chain antibodies, from which so-called single domain antibodies (sdAbs) can be isolated by genetic engineering. These anti-bodies are tougher and more durable than the antibodies now used in medical tests and biosensors. Single domain anti-bodies do not need refrigeration, for instance, and can withstand temperatures of almost 200 degrees Fahrenheit.

The researchers describe producing sdAbs to a smallpox virus surrogate, cholera toxin, and

other biothreats by harvesting antibodies from a library of over a billion different sdAbs engineered in the laboratory, which bypasses the need for injecting llamas with those substances. “The delivery speed and the sdAb protein characteristics of small size, ruggedness, and ability to be engineered for optimal orientation and patterning means that sdAbs are likely to be high-performance yet low maintenance substitutes for any antibody-based biosensor,” the report states.

What can Baboons Teach Us about Diabetes?

A few years ago, Dr. Tony Comuzzie made the observation that baboons at the Southwest Foundation sharing the same cage and eating the same diet showed amazing diversity in their weight. Some even had the equivalent of “beer bellies.” That observation led to research that now shows promise of providing insight into human obesity and the diseases related to it.

Fat baboons, like fat people can develop diabetes. Now scientists from the Foundation and the University of Texas Health Science Center are immersed in a variety of studies with the animals, looking at everything from the genetics of obesity to novel ways of repairing the pancreatic beta cells that malfunction in diabetes.

Dr. Comuzzie has recruited Dr. Ralph De Fronzo, a professor at the Heath Science Center, to use the animals in his specialty of developing and testing medications for diabetics.

Because baboons are so genetically similar to humans, sharing about 95 percent of the same genes, tests with these animals should be able to predict how humans will respond to drugs or other therapies.

Dr. DeFronzo is currently seeking funding to test a new technology involving inserting a small chamber of transplanted beta cells under the skin of some diabetic baboons at the Southwest Foundation. If this technique works, this may be a way to correct malfunctioning beta cells in human diabetics.



Courtesy of the San Antonio Express-News

Fall Lecture Luncheon Explains The Bird Flu

On November 15, 2006, Forum members and guests gathered at The Argyle to attend a luncheon and lecture by Dr. Jean Patterson, Chairman for the Department of Virology and Immunology at the SFBR, who spoke about the bird flu and its threat to the United States and the world. Dr. Patterson's lecture was informative and she was very patient with all of our questions. However, her message to "stay home" was unsettling to say the least.

We extend our thanks to Dr. Patterson and her staff for everything they did. This event was, once again, a sell-out and we also want to thank each of you who attended.

Evening Tour a Great Success

On Wednesday, October 25, 2006, the Forum hosted a cocktail buffet and tour of the Southwest Foundation for Bio-

medical Research (SFBR). The annual tour of the Foundation, chaired by **Meredith Campbell** and **Jodi Wood**, was a great success with record attendance.



Members and guests enjoyed a delicious reception catered

by Don Strange of Texas, Inc. while remarks were presented by SFBR President John C. Kerr and Forum President Brooke Connolly.

Guests divided into four separate groups, and were then given interactive presentations from the Department of Genetics, hosted by Dr. Laura Almasy and Dr. Eric Moses; and the Department of Virology and Immunology, hosted by Dr. Rebeca Rico-Hesse and Dr. Andrew Hayhurst. Attendees learned much about what these scientists are studying, discovering, and applying at the SFBR.

The Forum would like to thank the tour guides from the Foundation who hosted members and guests, as well as Ann Lakey-Reeks for her dedication to the Forum and for making this tour a success.

Student Tours Committee

The Student Tours Committee has selected ten area high schools to have the opportunity to tour the Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research. Twenty applications were received and the Committee had a difficult task of deciding the ten successful applicants. The tours will be held on Tuesday mornings from 9:30 until 11:30 a.m. starting on January 16 and ending March 27.

Audrey Mangold and **Jane VandeBerg** from the Student Tours Committee invite Forum members to volunteer to serve as hostesses for the tours. As hostesses, our responsibilities are to welcome the students on behalf of the Southwest Foundation Forum and to explain how the Forum supports SFBR. We then accompany the students on the tour, which is led by Amy Abdalla, Associate Developmental Officer.

Amy begins the tour by showing a brief film and explains the history of SFBR. The group then walks to the Genomics Center, also known as SFBR's computer ranch. Then the group boards a bus that takes them past some of the outdoor baboon cages and stops at the chimp playground and at the baboon corral, where the group is able to observe baboon behavior from an observation tower. The bus then brings the group back to the Hixon Conference Room where they are joined by a scientist from SFBR, who tells them how he or she became a scientist, gives a brief synopsis of his or her

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- Mrs. Joseph Mitchell (Jean)**
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SOUTHWEST FOUNDATION FORUM BOARD MEMBERS 2006-2007

2007-2008 Membership Drive

This year's Membership Drive proves to be better than ever with the added convenience of on-line renewal and sign-up. Don't worry, though, you will still be able to do everything the old-fashioned way (fill out a paper form and write a check)! We currently have over 400 members and are looking to increase that to 500 for 2007-08.

Some membership reminders:

Membership Year: August 1 – July 31
Membership Drive: March 1 – April 15

Dues (100% Tax Deductible!!!): \$35 (regular) and \$50 (patron)

All current members will receive a renewal reminder in the mail. All prospective members will receive a personalized letter. Anyone can sign up or renew on-line at www.swff.org.

Know someone who would be a great member? Send her name and address to Laura Moorman by calling 930-6033, by mail to 121 East Mariposa Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78212, or via email to lmoorman@sbcglobal.net. Thank you for your support!

Tours Committee

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research program, and welcomes questions from the students.

Those of us who have served as hostesses for previous tours all agree that we learn something new about the SFBR every time we serve. It is an extremely rewarding experience to see the students' enthusiasm for the research being done at SFBR.

Without the Forum's sponsorship, these tours would not happen. Every year the Student Tours Committee receives letters of appreciation from science teachers expressing their gratitude to the Forum for organizing the tours and explaining the positive impact on their students.

Please join us for this unique volunteer opportunity by contacting Audrey Mangold at 826-7145.

SOUTHWEST FOUNDATION FORUM

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