

American Medical Women's Association

Message from the President: Countdown to a Century of Service, Support, and Success

Claudia S. Morrissey, MD, MPH



Dear AMWA Members,

As some of you may know, I am spending a year working at the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland in the department of Gender, Women and Health. Over the last several weeks I have been examining data on the silent epidemic of violence against women. It is truly sobering.

Gender-based violence occurs around the world at every level of society and is used as a tool to maintain gender inequalities and social hierarchies, or to put it plainly: "to keep us in our place." Globally, at least one out of every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime; husbands and male partners are often the perpetrators. Gender-based violence can start in childhood and end in elder abuse.

So why am I bringing up this topic in what should be an upbeat, carefree message from president to members? Because we as women physicians have an important role to play in the early detection of gender-based violence and its prevention. In poll after poll, year after year, women health care providers are named as the most trusted professionals in the US.

We need to start noticing the unexplained bruises and abrasions. We need to be asking the right questions, the important questions in our "Review of Systems" to uncover what research is confirming is an all too common problem. We need to remember that the psychological trauma

suffered by victims of abuse can manifest in physical problems such as chronic pelvic pain and headaches.

What was once considered a "private matter" is now being recognized as a major public health problem requiring public health solutions. I encourage each of you, regardless of your specialty, to learn more about gender-based violence and what you can do as a health care provider. I would also like AMWA to become more engaged in this work. Let me know if you are interested in joining a Gender-based Violence Working Group or otherwise lending your support. Thanks.

Before you go on to read about some of the stellar and substantive work AMWA has undertaken over the last few months, I want to take this opportunity to personally invite you to our annual meeting in Williamsburg, VA, March 27-29, 2009. We are joining forces with the Institute for Women's Health and Liebert, Inc--publishers of the Journal of Women's Health--to provide a program that is packed with high-quality CME presentations.

The keynote speaker for our Awards Banquet is Dr. Joia Mukherjee, Professor of Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital, and Medical Director of Partners in Health. Dr. Mukherjee will share her experiences working on women's health issues in some of the poorest countries in the world. And, Colonial Williamsburg is a wonderful place to spend a weekend in the spring; you'll be able to walk to all the historical attractions from the conference hotel. Let's have coffee together.

Until then...

Yours in women's health,



In This Issue

<i>Message from the President</i> . . . page 1	<i>Student Region 5 Update</i> page 7
<i>Headquarters Report</i> page 2	<i>Committee Updates</i> page 8
<i>Going Green</i> page 3	<i>Member Benefits</i> page 11
<i>Featured Physician</i> page 4	<i>Member Benefits & Corporate Partners</i> page 12
<i>AMWA News</i> page 5-6	

Headquarters Report

AMWA Archives Find a New Home at Drexel Medical School

Rebecca Mathis, Associate Director

On Thursday, December 18, 2008, AMWA participated in the groundbreaking ceremony of the new Medical Simulation Center and Archives & Special Collections building at the Queen Lane Campus of Drexel University School of Medicine. AMWA's Associate Director helped shovel the first pile of dirt to begin the exciting process of creating a new home for the archives of AMWA, as well as the history of all women in medicine. The anticipated completion date is set for August 2009.



Rebecca Mathis (on far left) assists with the groundbreaking.



Dr. Doris Bartuska and Rebecca Mathis and at the reception.

Several local AMWA members were also able to attend the ceremony. Drs. Doris Bartuska and Estherina Shems witnessed the ceremony that recognized the many donors and corporate partners who will make this new addition to the campus possible. Ms. Mathis was asked to join other association representatives and partners on stage to be recognized for the generosity of their associations and their members.

AMWA will have a permanent lobby exhibit at the Archives & Special Collections on Women in Medicine--the largest collection of material pertaining to the history of women in medicine in the US. Located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the Archives will be part of Drexel University's new building for the Institute for Women's Health and Leadership.

The AMWA exhibit space will include a large showcase and full-size wall display where various documents related to AMWA's and AWHS's history will be presented. AMWA has moved its offices to Philadelphia and there is not enough space for an AMWA library and archival display. This new exhibit at Drexel University will be far more accessible to the general public, researchers, and AMWA members than the previous office space in Alexandria, Virginia.

To secure this permanent exhibit space in the new building, AMWA will need to raise \$100,000 over the next year. Please consider a contribution to this worthy cause. Any amount will help us reach the goal. Donations of \$2,500 and above will be individually recognized in the lobby's "The Wall of Fame" display. Please visit our website to make a donation to this historical cause: <https://amwa.amwa-doc.org/donations/index.cfm>.

Isabella Reese Matthews



Kimberly Sneed, former AMWA Director of Operations, gave birth to a beautiful baby girl on January 15, 2009.

Connections is a publication of the American Medical Women's Association

Lindsay Groff, MBA
Rebecca Mathis
Monica Mobely

Executive Director
Associate Director
Meeting Manager

AMWA, 100 North 20th Street, 4th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19103-1443
Phone: (215) 320-3716, (866) 564-2483, Fax: (215) 564-2175

On Renewable Energy - Physicians' Energy!

Linda Hawes Clever, MD, MACP
Founder & President of RENEW (www.renewnow.org)

Being green is in. We recycle our bottles and cans; agonize over paper or plastic; turn off the air conditioner or furnace -- and then peel off or pile on layers of clothes. We are quite charmed by the Prius' 50 miles per gallon.



Every now and then, while we are going green for our planet's sake, we need to think about ourselves, our capable, devoted and very, very busy selves. If Mother Earth needs preserving and it isn't too late, can we be green for our own sake? Can we preserve and build our own energy? We need that energy if we want to pay attention to our own endangered list: family, friends, colleagues, patients, neighborhood, country, planet – and ourselves.

Part of our challenge as women physicians and health professionals is to juggle work, family and community commitments that often become competing imperatives. How in the world can we build energy when we use so much energy? The not-for-profit RENEW (www.renewnow.org) has worked with physicians, nurses and other health care professionals for over a decade to help do just that—gain energy, effectiveness, and enthusiasm. We have found a step-wise formula that, like a chemical reaction, produces, restores and releases energy so we can move ahead: Awareness → Reflection → Conversation → Action. To expand the formula, we first realize that an issue or concern needs attention. Then we think about it. Then we talk with our dear ones about it. Then we can make plans and go into action. We restore our bodies, souls and outlook – and can better keep our promises.

Here is an example of how the “renewing Rx” works. The story has a green tint, since it has to do with growing, gardening, and buying locally. A couple had made a commitment to having both a strong marriage and active professional lives. After about twenty-five years, they realized that they weren't drifting apart, but rather, that they didn't have as much in common as they wanted. That was the “awareness” step. In the “reflection” step, they wondered how that happened – time constraints, mainly, it turned out – and what they might do to address the situation. Then came conversations with each other.

They batted around ideas about how to save time in their personal and professional lives and how to make time so they could start sharing more. As they talked, a variety of solutions surfaced. They could shift their schedules a bit, even if it meant decreased income. They had an important purpose—sharing--that was worth “sacrificing” some money. They acknowledged that they were not strangers to the kitchen; they both loved the outdoors; and one of them had spent a childhood on a farm. It took awhile – quite a pleasant while, actually – before their awareness, reflections and conversations gelled into plans and action. They took up canning. This involved trips to find the freshest and tastiest fruits and vegetables and later, planting their own. During harvest time, they do manage to keep their practices going, but their friends and patients say that they are a little sticky. The renewing formula streamlined their professional lives. Their canning made good memories as well as good applesauce and green beans.

We tend to want to do good, be excellent and to have meaning and joy in our lives. That takes a barrel of energy. Author E.B. White captured some of our quandary when he said, “I arise in the morning torn between a desire to save the world and the desire to enjoy the world. This makes it hard to plan the day.” We must plan our days, and move ahead, however. It's not as much a “balance” issue as a “values” issue. When we know and live our values, we can make sturdy decisions to avoid teetering on the edge of uncertainty and imbalance. Teetering takes a great deal of energy. We need to have anchors, to save energy, and values are anchors.

We may need some behavior modification to get into gear. We may need to say, “No” to the one more thing we're asked to do. But a judicious No brings respite that allows us to fulfill our commitments and perhaps say, “Yes” later on.

I must admit that “going green” sounds better for a planet than for a person; I wouldn't want to be chartreuse. But we are our most valuable resources. We need and deserve at least as much care as we give our global villages and our patients. We need to refresh ourselves. That isn't selfish. It's self-preservation. Then we can do what we want and need to do. We can have whole healthy lives, just the way we want our patients and our loved ones to live.

Featured Physician

Susan Black, MD

In 2000 at the International Aids Conference in Durban, SA, the President of SA, Thabo Mbeki gave the opening welcome. That was the famous address where he lost all credibility, stating that Aids was not caused by a virus but by poverty. He was booed off the stage and followed a 12 year old boy named Nkosi Johnson who stated that Moms and kids should never be separated by illness. His Mom had died when he was seven and had never been able to care for him as she was so ill. Gail Johnson, a white woman who was involved with a home for infected men, found him wandering on the streets at age two and took him in. She fostered him until his death in 2001 from Aids. At the time of his death he was the oldest living child with HIV in SA. Listening to this child was a life changing moment for me. I had been divorced twice and single parented my three children and felt the mother/child bond was the deepest and purist unconditional love I knew and that I would like to work to promote this relationship as much as I could. I spent four years in timing the move until Gail had fund-raised for a medical program at Nkosi's Haven, a long-term residence for Moms and their kids with HIV/Aids. I gave my practice in Lowell Mass to several young women doctors, sold my home and left in 2005 to move to SA and fulfill my dream. At present, I am the Medical director at Nkosi's Haven where I run a wellness program for all residents and run a nine bed hospice. I also have opened a medical program at Usindiso; a faith based residence for homeless and traumatized women, and I am a professor of family medicine at the University of the Witwatersrand Medical School where I teach mostly in the community with senior year medical students at the public health clinics.



I cannot begin to tell you how wonderful it is to do exactly what you want with your career. I always wanted to do work with just women and children and I achieved it. I get up every morning with a smile on my face and thankfulness in my heart that I have been allowed to do this work. I am a volunteer which allows me the privilege of saying "no" to anything I don't want to do. Where else could you find a hospice where 80% go home well!!

You have asked, "What are the major challenges I have faced as a woman physician?" I have never faced a problem in being a woman. It is a natural field for caring people and my maternal drive has allowed me to care for the orphans we have with a new depth. When I was in the United States, I was politically active as a board member and then the first woman officer of the American Academy of Family Physicians. It was in the early 90's and the organization was struggling with many issues in primary care. As the only woman on the board, and as a female vice president, I battled constantly on the differences in how men and women of power deal with their gift. It was a learning experience for me and taught me respect for my male colleagues on some levels and disdain for some of their power games on another. In all it served me well and I am not disappointed in diversity of approach to challenges anymore. We just deal differently!

I have been a member of AMWA for over 20 years. It is my oasis for collegiality and friendship. Nowhere have I felt such kinship of spirit and goals as with the women of AMWA, and there were times when I was dealing with male politicians when AMWA was the only place that medicine made sense. It is my anchor to why I went into medicine in the first place, and my hope for medicine's future. My advice to future women doctors is to wake every day with a new slate. There is a chance now to really change medicine and that will not come from an old boys club. The thought of Universal Access, a dream of mine and AMWA's for years, is about to be realized with the coming administration. We are years behind in pushing the primary care agenda that is so needed in American medicine but if we are ever able to save a crumbling health care system, dominated by specialists with self interest, it is now. We need to all be involved. We have given away our power for too long.

The web site for Nkosi's Haven is:
www.Nkosi.lafrica.com.

AMWA Legacy Fund



As noted in the Headquarters Report, AMWA has been extended an unprecedented opportunity to preserve our legacy for future generations of women physicians, scholars, and the general public. AMWA negotiated space for a

permanent lobby exhibit at Drexel University's new building for the Institute for Women's Health and Leadership, in Philadelphia. The Archives & Special Collections on Women in Medicine—the largest compilation of material pertaining to the history of women in medicine in the world and where AMWA houses its archives—will be moved into this new facility upon completion in August 2009.

AMWA's exhibit space will include a large showcase and full-size wall displays where documents, photographs, and memorabilia related to AMWA's history will be presented. To secure this space, AMWA has established the Legacy Fund and will be raising \$100,000 over the next year. This is a unique opportunity to preserve our history and showcase our achievements. Please consider making a contribution; any amount will help us reach the goal. Donations of \$1,000 or above will be noted on the AMWA website and those of \$2,500 and above will be individually recognized in the lobby's permanent "Wall of Fame" display. You may donate online at www.amwa-doc.org.

AMWA Member Recently Honored *Distinguished Service Award*

The Distinguished Service Award is the highest honor bestowed upon members of the Society for lifetime achievements. Since its inception, this award has honored very distinguished individuals, but has not been awarded every year. The 2009 recipient is Doris G. Bartuska, MD, FACP, FACE, who joined the Pennsylvania Medical Society in 1972. She received a unanimous vote of the Medical Society's Board of Trustees in winning the award.

Dr. Bartuska becomes only the 23rd Pennsylvanian physician to win this highly prestigious award since it was first introduced in 1956. She joins a distinguished list of

past recipients, including Jonas E. Salk, MD, and C. Everett Koop, MD. Nominated for the award by Dell Burkey, MD, past president of the Philadelphia County Medical Society, on behalf of the county medical society, Dr. Bartuska was described as an endocrinologist who advanced treatments focused on the genetic aspects of endocrine diseases, endocrinology of aging, osteoporosis, and thyroid diseases. Her work stimulated national interest in a woman's health agenda with emphasis on prevention and treatment of osteoporosis and smoking including smoke-related disease. Her involvement in medical humanities and medical ethics led to participation in the President's Forum on Physicians and Social Responsibility.

Dr. Bartuska, currently emeritus professor of medicine at Drexel University College of Medicine, has published numerous publications in her field. She was the director of the division of endocrinology, diabetes, and metabolism as well as the endocrine fellowship training program at WMC – MCP, now Drexel University College of Medicine. Dr. Bartuska is a 1949 graduate of Bucknell Junior College (now Wilkes University) and Bucknell University and a 1954 graduate of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania.

She is past president of the Philadelphia County Medical Society; past president of the medical staff at the Medical College of Pennsylvania; past president of the Philadelphia Endocrine Society; and past president of the American Medical Women's Association. She is also a founding board member of the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologist. In addition, she is one of the first female voting members of the House of Delegates at the American Medical Association.



Note to Readers from the AMWA Communications Co-Chair

"It isn't easy being green" and "R-E-S-P-E-C-T", the lyrics have become my recent signals on my life ruler. Why? Because for the past four months as I read the *New York Times* daily and sought examples of ethics and leadership, I noted unethical behaviors and disrespect, especially of women POT(Personal and Other terrorism) my term for domestic violence, and child abuse worldwide and constantly.

Fortunately and perhaps unfortunately, we can and must learn and know about so many things instantly from everywhere.

"It isn't easy being green" I define as being honest and ethical, despite what we are surrounded by in our personal and professional lives at all stages and at too many times.

"Respect" is my foundation life word, i.e., I must earn and learn to respect myself always, even when I notice I am different i.e., "green", from my surroundings.

"Ethics and leadership follow, again at all life stages and circumstances in personal and professional arenas, and then action consequent to what we see and think.

So your assignment each day and forever, is to self-assess all of the above and then?? Let me and others know.

P.S. This became more significant as I'm developing a lecture on ethics and leadership for the American Psychiatric Leadership Fellowship in San Francisco this May.

Take care and stay in touch,

Leah J. Dickstein, M.D., M.A.
lj Dicksteinmd@aol.com

EVENTS

2009 AMWA Annual Meeting Almost Sold Out! Register Today!

Women's Health 2009: The 17th Annual Congress and the Annual Meeting of AMWA

March 27-29, 2009

The Williamsburg Lodge
Williamsburg, VA

Presented
by Journal of
Women's Health
and VCU Insti-
tute for Wom-
en's Health
In collaboration
with AMWA



Congress Chair

Wendy S. Klein, MD
Senior Deputy Director Emeritus,
VCU Institute for Women's Health
Deputy Editor, Journal of Women's Health

Congress Co-Chair

Susan G. Kornstein, MD
Executive Director
VCU Institute for Women's Health
Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Women's Health

AMWA Co-Chair

Eliza Lo Chin, MD, MPH
Laurel A. Waters, MD, FCAP, FASCP

To view the PROGRAM, please click [here](#)

To view our distinguished FACULTY,
please click [here](#)

To REGISTER for the Women's Health 2009,
please click [here](#)

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS—for more information,
please click [here](#)

To view what PAST ATTENDEES SAID,
please click [here](#)

AMWA Student Track

Friday, March 27

5:30–7:30 pm Poster Reception

6:30–8:00 pm Mentoring Reception

Saturday, March 28

8:30–9:30 am Boards and Wards

9:30–10:30 am Applying, Interviewing &
The Match

2:00–4:30 pm Elections / General Meeting

Student Region 5 Update

Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas, and the Caribbean

Regional Student Coordinator

Mary E. Romero, MS3, from AUC, School of Medicine
Currently in London, UK, Queens Hospital, for surgery
and pediatric clerkships.



Mary E. Romero, MS3, with her vascular surgeon consultant/attending, Mr. Shami.

Congratulations & Welcome to Our Newest Chapters:

Meharry Medical College of Nashville, TN

President: Erika Simpson
Vice President: Bridget Battles
Secretary: Aisha Jennings
Treasurer: Ellana Stinson

Ponce School of Medicine of Puerto Rico

President: Joan Albors
Vice President: Yorlenis Hevia
Secretary: Gabriela Cotto
Treasurer: Sol de Jesus
Event Coordinator: Sarah Narotzky

Local Chapter Updates

American University of the Caribbean (AUC)

President, Geneva LeJeune

The chapter held the following events:

- Lee Jeans Denim Day 2008- raised \$1200 by bake sale both on the island and in Louisiana
- Hosted activities for Crystal Children's Home: Boardwalk Arcade Day, Beach Day with BBQ
- De-Stress Fest before finals: massages, yoga, healthy snacks and homemade stress balls provided



"Men Can Bake Sale" fund-raised \$300.



American University of Antigua

President, Samantha Davis

The chapter held the Women's Health Expo 2008 in recognition of International Women's Day. Educational booths and organizations like Breast Friends (local group of cancer survivors), AIDS Secretariat of Antigua and Barbuda and Minister of Health as well as a team of gynecologists were present to provide information on healthy lifestyles and relaxation techniques. Over 50 women received free manual breast exams and many more received free HIV tests.



American University of the Caribbean Chapter Officers

LSUHSC in New Orleans

President, Julie Neumann

- Hosted a meeting on "Gender Differences in Disease Presentation" for Women's Heart Health Month
- Co-hosted a meeting on HPV and Gardasil with the OB-Gyn Interest Group
- Held a senior match panel
- Collected toiletries and cosmetic bags for a Women's Homeless Clinic

UTHSCSA, University of Texas, San Antonio

President, Julie Donelson

- Invited speakers with information on how to treat and interact with patients that have common women's health issues: August-Rape crisis center reps, September-Planned Parenthood reps, October-Eating Disorders, and November is Breast Cancer Awareness
- Komen fundraising week with bake sales and annual Powderpuff game, auction, and barbeque



UT, Southwestern Chapter Officers organizing mentorship and networking opportunities as well as raising awareness for breast cancer, domestic violence and teen pregnancy.

Vanderbilt

President, Oph Jaru-ampornpan

- AMWA speaker event: Surviving versus Thriving in Medical School
- AMWA mentoring program in where faculties matched with students and reception followed

Committee Updates

A note of appreciation
Dear AMWA Overseas Assistance Grant Chair
person and Review Committee

I am thrilled to be a recipient of an Overseas Assistance Grant, and I wanted to express my sincere gratitude for the Committee's consideration and selection of my project in Mombasa, Kenya. The project would not be possible without your support, and I thank you. I believe my project will contribute to efforts to prevent and reduce sexual violence against women and girls in Mombasa, and I commend the American Women's Medical Association's dedication to support such efforts.

In gratitude,

Elizabeth Harrington
USF School of Medicine

Advocacy Report (Activity to date) As of January 31, 2009

Submitted by Dr. Omega Silva, Chair

January 31, 2009—Dr. Omega Silva attended the Herndon Alliance annual meeting at the Mayflower Hotel at which its 2009 board was ratified and listened to presentations on healthcare moderated by Bob Crittenden with survey research by Celinda Lake on the *Cost of Doing Nothing*, Public Plan by Richard Kirsch with **Healthcare for America Now**, Anthony Wright of **Health Access California** and Ron Pollack of **Families USA** on state and national work to maximize chances for national reform. The group agreed it must be done this year or never and the president's budget must get the ball rolling. The discussion was centered on effective ways to push the process.

January 28, 2009—AMWA signed onto a letter to Senator Baucus requesting special consideration be given to women's health, that specific items be included, and that uninsured women be included in any bill emanating from his committee, The Senate Committee on Finance. This effort is being lead by the National Women's Law Center.

January 17, 2009—AMWA signed onto a letter to the Senate initiated by the National Center for Immigrant Women's Rights urging the Senate to pass the reauthorization of the SCHIP program which now includes immigrant children.

January 6, 2009—AMWA signed on to a letter to President-Elect Obama to tackle the national problem of overweight and obesity in children and adults as they are an epidemic that needs to be addressed as part of the healthcare problem. The letter was initiated by the Center for Science in the Public Interest.

December 29, 2008—The ACLU and National Advocates for Pregnant Women posted a victory in the Lovill vs. Texas case AMWA signed onto on January 18, 2008.

November 3, 2008—AMWA signed onto an Amicus brief with the National Advocates for Pregnant Women in the case of Michelle Geiser Behles vs. North Dakota on her alleged abuse of prescription drugs while pregnant. She had a miscarriage.

October 20, 2008—AMWA joined in on the tag line of a national TV spot which focused on why it is important to confront the candidates on what they will do to promote preventive care; it featured stars such as Lauren Bacall. Mark Blum helped to orchestrate AMWA's involvement.

- Held a panel discussion on Life of Female physicians (Career versus Family)
- Co-organized a YWCA School Supplies Drive with Meharry-Vanderbilt Student Alliance
- Co-organized a panel speakers on "Glass Ceiling in Medicine" for female and minority physicians
- Co-organize a V-Day campaign eg. Vagina Monologue performance and education on Women's health and sexual assault
- Held a health fair, co-organized with AMSA
- Published a booklet, *Reflections from Women in Medicine*

Tulane

- Hosted lunch meeting with the Race for the Cure group and Chair of Women's Public Health School
- Fundraised with T-shirts and ribbons for Susan B. Komen
- Sponsor for Tulane race team



If you would like to highlight your student chapter or region, please email associatedirector@amwa-doc.org.

Committee Updates

July 26, 2008—AMWA signed on to the letter to President Bush asking him not to reduce contraception access; this action was initiated by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

June 13, 2008—AMWA signed onto a letter requesting that Congress increase funding for the Infertility Prevention Program within the Centers for Disease Control initiated by ASHA.

June 11, 2008—AMWA sent a statement reiterating our position on HRT endorsed in the May 19, 2008 letter to Congress (see April 13 above) in response to the International Academy of Compounding Pharmacists' rebuttal letter on its website accusing all the signers of that letter of being supported by Wyeth.

AWHS Supported Clinic Update

Madi Health Project

In 2008 Clinic Nepal set up a two-week journey with a health team to an isolated area known as Madi. Madi is situated in the district of Chitwan in Nepal. There are about 70,000 people living in the area. There are no doctors or nurses, no electrical supply or any communication facilities, with very poor transportation through the entire region. There is a derelict hospital and an abandoned health post. The Rewa River and its tributaries form a huge obstacle, as nine major streams must be crossed by fording. The population includes many ethnic groups and literacy rates are very low.

Clinic Nepal, a Khatmandu non-profit health entity, a recipient of a small grant from American Women's Hospitals Services (AWHS) sent a medical team into the area to hold free health clinics. Teams consisted of ten people including doctors, nurses, medical students, pharmacist and aides, with one ambulance.

Madi includes four Village Development Committees. The Nepal group visited the village of Seruwa first. They noted that the villagers were living under miserable conditions with little opportunity to get definitive medical care because of travel costs. Little care is taken of personal health. At Seruwa the group treated 892 patients in their three-day stay. Of these 329 were male adults and children and 563 were female. The most complaints were of musculo-skeletal pain, more frequently in the female patients. As the women do the main part of the work in the fields, this is not surprising.

120 patients presented with symptoms of gastritis, again more females. The main causes were described as "curry, hurry and worry." Gynecologic problems were next in frequency, pelvic inflammatory disease, also prolapsed uterus and urinary infections. Health education for per-

sonal hygiene was given and six minor operations, such as removal of small cysts, were performed.

The next clinic was at a village called Jeevanpur. The clan group was mostly the Tharu, and here the women were able to put on a display of their dances for the team. In Jeevanpur the team saw 300 patients and spent one day there. Ninety-eight were male and 202 were female. In this village gastritis was the main complaint with 77 patients and 56 were seen with joint pain and backache. As with other camps these patients were instructed in proper working positions as well as given medication. Thirty-four patients presented with skin infections. These were common in all camps and necessitated education in personal hygiene.

The next visit was a one-day clinic at the village of Baghanda. There they treated 430 patients of which over half were women. Although musculo-skeletal complaints were the most common and gastritis was next (these patients received medication and warnings to avoid spicy food, probably an impossibility). In this village there were 90 patients with respiratory symptoms, mostly children. Little understanding of cold weather seemed to be the root of this problem. Here also were 18 patients with hypertension.

Moving on, the team visited the village of Kharkatta. These people have absolutely no access to any kind of medical care. The team stayed here for five days and saw 1,701 individuals, with 1,265 being women and girls. As with the other villages, back and joint pains predominated with gastritis a second. In this village there were 11 patients with chronic tonsillitis and more fungal skin infections were seen here than elsewhere.

The total of the patients seen during this two-week trip was 3,323. More than 2,000 were women and girls. Some of these patients had already been diagnosed but had been unable to



Sukhiram after the operation.

get treatment because of lack of money. Included were patients with cancer, kidney stones, kidney failure, hernias and prolapsed uterus. Three adults were diagnosed with damaged heart valves urgently in need of surgery. In one case, this diagnosis was already identified up to five years ago. After the clinic visit, negotiations with the Na-

Committee Updates

tional Heart Hospital, part sponsorship was obtained and the clinic doctor and his friends provided the remainder. One further nine year old with congenital heart disease was taken by the clinic staff to the hospital in Kathmandu and a date (two years in the future) was made for her surgery.

AWHS is proud to be able to help, with a small grant, these selfless people who work under conditions we can scarcely imagine. We would like to make it more.

Program Committee Report

*Eliza Chris, MD, MPH & Laurel Waters, MD
Co-Chairs*

The program committee has been working closely with BioConferences International, Inc. to plan what promises to be a wonderful AMWA Annual Meeting coming up on March 27-29. Set right in the heart of historic Williamsburg, attendees will hear the latest updates on Women's Health - from Menopause management to breast and ovarian cancer to HIV. AMWA is also proud to have Dr. Joia Mukherjee, international health physician and human rights advocate as our featured banquet speaker. Come to the meeting and re-connect with colleagues and friends. Help mentor young women physicians and students. Sign up today as space is filling up fast!

Student Affairs Committee Report

*Neeta Varshney
Chair*

The student division of AMWA is continuing its mission this year of expanding the scope of our organization, bringing together our many local chapters, and supporting our students through scholarships and grants. Recent projects include partnerships with Women's Empowerment Institute and Women's Health Summit, and an amazing regional conference held by Region 6, supported in part through a grant from National AMWA.

We are especially excited about the national conference this year, as we have some great programming lined up for our members. We have put a great deal of effort into the conference, and we hope it will be a memorable experience for you! This year, we are offering 20 travel

grants of \$600 each, and we are also holding a research poster fair, with cash prizes. We have also added a number of new national positions to better allow our students to become involved with AMWA at a national level. The information is all available online at www.amwa-doc.org, in the Student section, but please feel free to contact any of your national leaders if you are interested in learning more about any of these new prospects.

Women's Health Working Group Report

*Janice Werbinski, MD, FACOG
Chair*

Lila Nevrikar represented AMWAs Women's Health group at the fourth annual HPV and Cervical Cancer Summit in Washington DC November 20-22, sponsored by Women In Government. They have launched a national "Pearl of Wisdom" campaign focused on preventing cervical cancer throughout the world. Their basic tenets include:

Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in women around the world – in the U.S., 11,070 women will be diagnosed with cervical cancer and 3,870 will die of the disease.

Cervical cancer can be prevented – through programs that use the Pap test, the HPV test and the HPV vaccine. Working together, we can make sure that girls and women everywhere have access to these preventive technologies.

AMWA will have 500 pearl pins at the annual meeting, supporting this campaign. Further information is available at the www.pearlofwisdom.us website.

The WHWG continues to meet by monthly conference calls. Mary Kleinman and Memoona Hasnain presented our Curriculum Project to members of the Education department at University of Illinois, Chicago, and we received some very constructive feedback with suggested changes to make the project easier to fund. We are also exploring several websites which are collecting, displaying, and reviewing curricula in other areas of study. We will be working on changes to our project over the next two months, and will bring the revised project to the annual meeting in Williamsburg in March.

Member Benefits

The AMWA Board of Directors Election Results Are In!

The new board will convene at the AMWA Annual meeting in Williamsburg, VA, March 29, 2009

Executive Committee

Beatrice S. Desper, MD
President

Eliza C. Lo Chin, MD, MPH
President Elect

Claudia S. Morrissey,
MD, MPH
Immediate Past President

Janice Werbinski, MD
Secretary

Mary Fitzsimmons, MD
Treasurer

Directors

Anne L. Barlow Ramsay, MD
Elinor T. Christiansen, MD
Marlene Cutitar, MD
Diana J. Galindo, MD
Roberta Gebhard, MD

Katherine Neely, MD
Misty Richards
Laurel A. Waters, MD
Neeta Varshney

AMWA Introduces Its Official Scarf!

Thanks to the artistic talents of AMWA board member, Elinor Christiansen, MD, AMWA members can now wear a piece of AMWA history! Each scarf is made of silk and measures 18" by 60". If you are interested in purchasing an AMWA scarf, please email associatedirector@amwa-doc.org for ordering information, or call AMWA headquarters at 215-320-3716.



Journal of Women's Health

AMWA has named the Journal of Woman's Health as its official publication. This important resource is published 10 times per year and, as a member of AMWA, you will receive FREE online access to the Journal for 2009. This online subscription allows access to all the back issues of JWH publishes since 1999! A deeply discounted 2009 print subscription option of \$85 US and \$115 outside US is also available to members. These subscription options to *Journal*



of Women's Health will further enhance your benefits as a member of AMWA. To learn how to receive this great benefit, please email associatedirector@amwa-doc.org with "JWH Subscription" as the subject line.

Journal of Women's Health is an essential reference providing a multidisciplinary approach, and complete coverage of all the latest advancements in the full purview of women's healthcare issues. The Journal has been cited by: *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *US News and World Report*, and *MSNBC.com*.

AMWA JOINS GLOBAL PEARL OF WISDOM™ CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT CERVICAL CANCER

As mentioned previously, AMWA is partnering with advocacy groups across the United States and Europe in a new, united effort to prevent cervical cancer worldwide. The *Pearl of Wisdom Campaign to Prevent Cervical Cancer* (www.pearlofwisdom.us) will raise awareness of cervical cancer, encourage women to take advantage of the means that are now available to prevent it, and work to make sure these methods are accessible to girls and women around the globe.

Here's how you can support the campaign:

Start the conversation. Purchase a Pearl of Wisdom pin, designed specifically in support of cervical cancer awareness and prevention, at www.pearlofwisdom.us. Then wear the pin and tell others why you're wearing it. (All proceeds go to the U.S. Pearl of Wisdom Campaign Fund to support cervical cancer prevention activities.)
Pass it on! Go to www.pearlofwisdom.us, where you can:

- Purchase additional pins for colleagues, friends, and family members.
- Send a digital pin to the women in your life.
- Download a pearl button or banner to link your website, Facebook page, blog, Myspace page, etc. to the campaign.
- Print the Pearl of Wisdom Poster to hang in your office and the Pearl of Wisdom Campaign Flyer to give your patients

Member Benefits & Corporate Partners

Interested in getting more involved with your AMWA membership? Join one of the 14 Committees and Working Groups, and donate your time and enthusiasm to grow AMWA as an association. Email your interest in a committee or questions to associatedirector@amwa-doc.org. Here is a listing of all Committees and Work Groups: American Women's Hospital Service, Awards and Nominations, Annual Meeting/Program, Communications, Fundraising, Global Outreach, Membership, Physician Branch Affairs, Policy and Advocacy, Resolutions/Position Papers, Senior Physicians, Student Affairs, Women's Health, and Career Development.

Be sure to attend the face-to-face committee meetings held on Thursday, March 26, in Williamsburg, VA at the Annual Meeting.

Featured Membership Benefit

Finally – Scrubs & Lab Coats for Female Clinicians

Lara Manchik, PA-C

Graduating from PA school in 1999, almost a decade of wearing frumpy scrubs and lab coats became a twisted comedy of getting “ready” for work in a pajama-like uniform. I've always been somewhat into fashion and style. At one point, I calculated that I was spending 30% of my week wearing scrubs. I



was so used to it, but why? Surely there must be a better option for female clinicians. And when I couldn't find one - I was fueled with motivation to change that.

The goal was simple – to source the highest quality fabrics and trim, with a focus on comfort and quality. More difficult of a task – was to maintain the traditional features of unisex style scrubs and lab coats, yet to introduce professionally appropriate feminization and modern functionality. “Finally!” seems to be the most common, welcomed response. This gives me tremendous pride – to be able to offer my colleagues scrubs and lab coats with abundant upgrades and a flattering, professional appearance. We all deserve that.

Medelita proudly supports AMWA in its mission to advance women in medicine and improve women's health. AMWA members will receive free shipping and embroidery on their orders by entering the coupon code **AMWA at check out on their website** (www.medelita.com). **Medelita will donate 10% of all AMWA sales to the American Medical Women's Association.**

Thank you to our AMWA Corporate Partners!

