

Southwest Chapter News



January 2003

2002–2003

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Annual John P. McGovern Award Banquet

Wednesday, January 29, 2003, 5:30–8:00 p.m.

Houston Plaza Hilton

The AMWA Southwest Chapter is pleased to announce that this year's John P. McGovern Award winner is Robin Marantz Henig. On Wednesday, January 29, 2003, please join us for the annual John P. McGovern Award Banquet at the Houston Plaza Hilton to honor Ms. Henig, who will present a lecture entitled "Turning Science into Stories: The Limits of Narrative Nonfiction."

"Narrative" is a buzzword in publishing these days, and nonfiction writers are always looking for a good story through which to unfold some truths about how the world works. But does narrative really work when your subject is science or medicine? If the story itself is too thin, it groans under the weight of the scientific and intellectual truths you might be hoping to reveal. Ms. Henig will discuss the difference between old-fashioned explanatory science writing and the new narrative approach, using as examples her previous books on emerging viruses, the history of public health, and the early history of genetics, as well as her book-in-progress about the early days of in vitro fertilization research.

Ms. Henig is a New York City science writer who has written seven books and dozens of articles. Her most recent book, *The Monk in the Garden: The Lost and Found Genius of Gregor Mendel*, was a finalist for the National Book Critics

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John P. McGovern Award winner Robin Marantz Henig, left, is pictured outside Gregor Mendel's monastery in Brno, Czech Republic. She is holding a bunch of Moravian peas, the plants that Mendel used to uncover the secrets of inheritance in 1865. For more about Ms. Henig, visit

<http://www.nasw.org/users/robinhenig/>.

John P. McGovern Award Banquet *(continued from page 1)*

Circle Award. Next year, she will publish *Pandora's Baby*, about the early days of in vitro fertilization research. Ms. Henig's articles have appeared in *The New York Times Magazine*, *Civilization*, *Discover*, and many women's magazines, and her honors include an Alicia Patterson Foundation fellowship and a grant from the Sloan Foundation.

The banquet will begin with registration and a predinner reception to begin at 5:30 p.m., located on the eighth floor of the hotel. An assortment of cheeses and seasonal fruits will be served, and a cash bar will be available. Dinner will be served promptly at 6:30 p.m. and will consist of a Caesar salad followed by your choice of entrée: pecan-crusted chicken breast with white wine cream sauce, or enchiladas filled with grilled spinach, potatoes, mushrooms, and ricotta and topped with sun-dried-tomato and roasted-corn relish. Both entrées will be served with vegetables and warm rolls. At about 7:15 p.m., the lecture will begin while attendees enjoy dessert: a slice of carrot cake with cream-cheese frosting served with a choice of coffee or tea.

The registration fee for the banquet is \$28 for AMWA members and \$30 for nonmembers. A dessert-and-coffee option (\$7 for AMWA members and \$9 for nonmembers) is available for those who are unable to attend the dinner but who would like to arrive later to attend the lecture (7:15 p.m.) Please complete and mail the reservation form below as soon as possible; note that the registration deadline is Friday, January 24, 2003.

The Houston Plaza Hilton (713.313.4000) is located at 6633 Travis Street in Houston near the Texas Medical Center. Travis Street runs north/south and is parallel to and one block west of Main Street. From West Holcombe Boulevard, turn north on Main Street to Dryden. Turn left on Dryden and left on Travis; the hotel will be on your left. You may park in the hotel garage (parking passes will be available at the event). Please take the elevators to the eighth floor. For more information, contact either Kate Ó Súilleabhain (713.792.3165 or Caitcinnor@aol.com) or Lisa Wann (281.863.3373 or EWann@lexgen.com).

John P. McGovern Award Banquet

Wednesday, January 29, 2003

Registration deadline: Friday, January 24, 2003

Your name _____

Name(s) of guest(s) _____

Your daytime phone _____

Your e-mail _____

Complete dinner: \$28 for AMWA members, \$30 for nonmembers

Please indicate one entrée choice for each person:

Pecan-crusted chicken Vegetable enchiladas

Dessert and coffee *only*: \$7 for AMWA members, \$9 for nonmembers

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

Please mail this registration form along with your check, payable to AMWA Southwest, to Lisa Wann, 3502 Burlington Street, #13, Houston, TX 77006.

December Lecture and Holiday Gala

On Tuesday, December 3, 2002, at 6 p.m., about 40 people gathered at the Houston Academy of Medicine–Texas Medical Center Library to attend a lecture entitled “*Frankenstein* and Ethical Challenges in the Medical Future,” given by Stanley J. Reiser, MD, PhD, Griff T. Ross Professor of Humanities and Technology in Health Care, Program on Humanities, Technology, and Health Care at The University of Texas Health Science Center. This December event, which happened to mark the chapter’s annual holiday gala, was free and open to the public, drawing AMWA members as well as nonmembers from throughout the Houston area.

Dr. Reiser’s lecture was given in association with “*Frankenstein: Penetrating the Secrets of Nature*,” a traveling exhibit that was developed by the National Library of Medicine in collaboration with the American Library Association. Attendees had a chance to view the exhibit, which consisted of images and articles outlining the historical, literary, and philosophic import of Mary Shelley’s novel, the story of a physician researcher who creates a hideous man/monster who eventually turns on his inventor and society.

Dr. Reiser began his talk by explaining the origins of attempts to ensure ethical accountability of medical researchers toward patients in the 20th century. Following the atrocities committed in Nazi-controlled

concentration camps in the name of medical experimentation during World War II, the guidelines emanating from Nuremberg Trials were among the first to formally recognize the ethical responsibilities of physicians in performing medical experiments involving humans. Moreover, the use of the atomic bomb in World War II raised the important issue of an inventor’s moral obligations to society. Later, the 1960s ushered in the biologic age, with successes in medical innovations such as organ transplantation bringing issues of medical practitioners’ responsibilities toward patients even more to the forefront. A gifted and enthusiastic speaker, Dr. Reiser spurred lively audience participation in the question of how much accountability researchers, especially those in medical fields, bear in the uses and abuses of their discoveries. Several attendees suggested ways to address this ethical issue internationally and proposed ways to encourage innovative research while ensuring accountability.

Before the lecture, attendees enjoyed delicious treats and refreshments in the library conference room. Cosponsored by the AMWA Southwest Chapter and the HAM-TMC Library, the lecture was Web-cast live and should soon be available for viewing online. Further information is forthcoming on the AMWA Southwest Chapter Web site.

Spring 2003 Membership Appreciation Event

The AMWA Southwest Chapter will hold a spring event for members and other individuals who are interested in meeting colleagues and learning about all that the chapter has to offer. Snacks will be provided, and a cash bar will be available. The event is tentatively scheduled for April 2003 at Berryhill Hot Tamales near the Houston Galleria; details will be provided soon.

In May, the chapter will elect its 2003–2004 board. If you’re interested in contributing your time and talents while advancing your professional-association experience this year, please contact Tom Gegeny (tom@centerforraids.org or 713.527.8219) or Kate Ó Súilleabháin (Caitcinnor@aol.com or 713.792.3165).

AMWA Southwest Chapter News

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AMWA Southwest Chapter Schedule, 2003

Mark your calendar for these AMWA Southwest Chapter meetings!

Wednesday, January 29, 2003, 5:30–8:00 p.m.

Annual Dr. John P. McGovern Award Banquet

Robin Marantz Henig, “Turning Science into Stories: The Limits of Narrative Nonfiction”
Houston Plaza Hilton, 6633 Travis, Houston, TX

Thursday, March 13, 2003, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Lecture: Carol Ann Wilson Story, Plain Language Association

“Plain Language: Ensuring Strong Communication”
The University of Texas School of Public Health, Auditorium, Houston, TX

Wednesday, May 14, 2003, 6:00–8:00 p.m.

Fourth Annual Career Roundtables

Topics and presenters to be announced.
Baba Yega Restaurant, 2607 Grant, Houston, TX