



**Southwest
Chapter**

Newsletter of AMWA Southwest Chapter

November 2005

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AMWA Southwest Holiday Gala with a lecture by David S. Buck, MD

Date: December 5, 2005 (Monday)

Time: 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Place: Josephine's Ristorante
1209 Caroline Street
Houston, Texas

The annual AMWA Southwest Holiday Gala approaches! Please join us at Josephine's Ristorante for delicious Italian fare and a lecture by David S. Buck, MD, an associate professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine. He is also the president and chief medical officer of Healthcare for the Homeless-Houston, the lead organization in a consortium of agencies dedicated to meeting the challenges of providing health care to Houston's homeless population.

Dr. Buck will speak about his and his colleagues' efforts to implement an innovative model of medical care for the homeless designed to engage them where they live—on the streets—and to provide continuity of care for this transient patient population. For his efforts, Dr. Buck received the Association of American Medical Colleges Humanism in Medicine Award in 2000 and was again selected as a distinguished finalist for the award in 2003.

Dinner will begin at 6:00 p.m. with salad and Italian bread, followed by your choice of entrée: pasta primavera, veal marsala, chicken Damian (breast of chicken sautéed in wine, garlic, and olive oil with Italian sausage and a tomato, onion, and sweet-pepper sauce on top), and fettuccine Storenski (pasta topped with shrimp and crab simmered in a cream sauce). Entrée, drink, and dessert choices will be made at the restaurant.

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Josephine's Ristorante is located downtown at 1209 Caroline Street between Polk and Dallas. Street parking around the restaurant is free after 5 p.m. (recommended). Parking also is available at two All Right parking lots (one in front of and one behind the restaurant) at a cost of \$4. The cost for the dinner will be \$25 for members and \$28 for nonmembers.

RSVP for the holiday gala by Thursday, December 1, by sending your check (payable to AMWA Southwest) to Steve Palmer at 6615 Meadowlawn Street, Houston, TX 77023, or RSVP by e-mail to spalmer@heart.thi.tmc.edu. If you register by e-mail, please be prepared to pay at the door on the day of the event.

Health Communicator Maria Jibaja-Weiss Addresses Low Health Literacy at October Meeting

At a dinner meeting on October 11, Maria L. Jibaja-Weiss, EdD, addressed 23 members of the AMWA Southwest Chapter about her work designing computer-based resources to communicate health information to low-literacy people. An associate professor of family and community medicine at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Dr. Jibaja-Weiss has published several journal articles about her work in health communication.

“Computerized programs that use text, audio, graphics, and other media can provide people with the information they need to get involved in their medical decisions,” Dr. Jibaja-Weiss explained. “To appeal to naïve computer users, however, these programs must be nonthreatening, engaging, and entertaining.”

Dr. Jibaja-Weiss said that she and her colleagues have approached this challenge by designing interactive educational programs with two key components: (1) a medical situation dramatized in the style of a soap opera (or *telenovela*) and (2) an interactive learning module (ILM) that relies on voice-over narration and simple graphics, instead of pull-down menus and text-filled screens, to enhance the message presented in the *telenovela*. She noted that the soap opera episodes can be

targeted to specific age groups and races and that the content of the ILMs can be personalized to the viewer (e.g., by clinical breast cancer stage). Both English and Spanish versions of the soap opera and ILM components are being developed.

Dr. Jibaja-Weiss demonstrated to the audience a track of a program that was developed for women who have just learned that they have breast cancer. Prompted by questions and comments from the audience, Dr. Jibaja-Weiss demonstrated the program’s frequent opportunities for patient-video interaction and its flexibility in allowing users to skip or repeat sections as needed. She noted that, in preliminary tests of this program, women who were followed up months after watching the program generally had vivid memories of it and recalled the story line as “uplifting” and “hopeful.” Interestingly, however, the women who viewed the program tended to lose interest in breast-conserving surgery. Although Dr. Jibaja-Weiss and her fellow researchers hypothesize that this was due to increased interest in mastectomy as a treatment option, she said they are still investigating this trend.

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“Developing computer-based resources for low-literacy people is a complex and expensive but promising strategy for health communication,” Dr. Jibaja-Weiss concluded. Consequently, she and her colleagues are seeking grants to update and improve the existing programs. Dr. Jibaja-Weiss has been named to the National Hispanic/Latina Advisory Council of the [Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation](#) and she received in 2002 a Recognition Award from the Center for Research on Minority Health at The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. For further information on her research and development program, please visit <http://>

www.bcm.edu/familymed/research/retratos.

The dinner presentation was held in the high-ceilinged, white-columned upstairs dining room of downtown Houston’s historic Spaghetti Warehouse. Before introducing Dr. Jibaja-Weiss, Program Chair Steve Palmer first acknowledged the presence of AMWA Southwest Chapter members Susan Siefert and Tom Gegeny. Susan is currently the national president of AMWA and Tom had just successfully finished his year as national coordinator for the 2005 AMWA annual conference in Pittsburgh, PA.

AMWA Annual Conference

by Ann Sutton

The Southwest Chapter made an impressive showing at AMWA’s 2005 annual conference, held from September 29 to October 1 in Pittsburgh, PA. Our own Thomas Gegeny, MS, ELS, was the annual conference administrator. He was also a workshop leader and will again serve on AMWA’s executive committee as Administrator of Web and Internet Technology. Another chapter member, Susan E. Siefert, ELS, is AMWA’s new national president.

MPH; Susan R. Madigan; Marianne Mallia-Hughes, ELS; and Jude Richard, ELS.

A new event was the Coffee and Dessert Klatches. Kristina Anderson, BA; Christina Chambers, MA, ELS; Kackie Daniel, BS, PPD; and Barbara Gastel, MD, MPH were Southwest Chapter members who led informal roundtables on interesting topics such as *Fun and Easy Camping Vacations*.

Approximately 760 medical writers and editors, including about 60 from the Southwest Chapter, gathered at the Hilton Pittsburgh for workshops, roundtables, poster presentations, and networking. Nine posters were presented, including one by Southwest Chapter member Diego Pineda, MS.

The keynote speaker was Bernard Fisher, MD, formerly of the National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project, who spoke on his 47 years of experience in breast cancer research and treatment. For those who missed it or are interested in seeing it again, an effort is being made to digitize it and make it available on the national AMWA website.

This year we had 46 core and 14 advanced credit workshops with course homework available electronically for the first time. Workshop leaders from our chapter included Susan Bairnsfather; Christina Chambers, MA, ELS; Anita Frijhoff, PhD; Barbara Gastel, MD,

The John P. McGovern award was given to Danielle Ofri, MD, PhD, editor-in-chief of the *Bellevue Literary Review*, who explained why doctors need to tell the stories of their experiences with patients.

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The Walter C. Alvarez award went to Ruth Murphey Parker, MD, who discussed health literacy and showed a few video clips of patients to illustrate the issues.

As always, the December 2005 issue of the *AMWA Journal* will have extensive information about the conference.

AMWA Southwest will host the **2006 AMWA annual conference**, *Reaching New Heights*, in Albuquerque, NM, from October 26 to October 28. (*Psst! Rumor has it that hot-air balloon rides will be available to attendees each morning before the start of classes!*)



AMWA Southwest Photo Gallery

The 2005 annual conference in Pittsburgh is the first conference to be featured on AMWA Southwest's new [photo gallery](#). The pictures were kindly provided by Marlane Kayfes, MS.

Members are invited to submit photos for inclusion on the web. High-resolution digital pictures are, of course, preferred. If your photos are analog (aka "paper"), you may scan them or lend them to me to be scanned.



Acceptable photos include:

- Pictures of yourself.
- Pictures of other AMWA members.
- Pictures of speakers or other people relevant to AMWA.
- Photos from conference city tours.

If you would like to submit something that is not on that list but that you feel would be appropriate for or appreciated by other members, contact me so we can discuss it.

Finally, if you are willing to be the chapter photographer, please let me know.

Ann Sutton, Webmaster

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