Upcoming Boston Area Events

Peer Mentoring Workshop  Sat, Nov 6
Katharine Dexter McCormick Birthday Party  December
McCormick Holiday Potluck  January
IAP: Life after MIT: A Woman’s Perspective  January
MIT Women’s Sports Afternoon  Spring
Women Grad Students Event  Spring
Annual Meeting  May
Visits to Local Clubs by Women Professors  Ongoing

For information on upcoming AMITA events check the AMITA web site
AMITA Events  http://alumweb.mit.edu/groups/amita/events.html
AMITA Jobs listserv  amita_jobs@mitvma.mit.edu
AMITA Web site  http://alumweb.mit.edu/groups/amita/

Events in Planning, Volunteers Needed

Pioneer Reunion  Audrey Buyrn (VIII) suggested a reunion of MIT Alumnae from the pre-McCormick Hall. Send suggestions for topic/program, format, location or participation interest to chrisjansen@earthlink.net.

SWE April Meeting  The Society of Women Engineers—Boston will host Prof. Millie Dresselhaus, MIT Electrical Engineering Department and AMITA Honorary Members at the April Meeting. Watch for the date!

Save the Date!  MIT will be hosting a women’s leadership conference on April 30. Look for upcoming details from AMITA, WILG, McCormick, MITAA. and other groups.

Science Club for Girls  Beth O’Sullivan, Course 18 ’75, seeks mentor volunteers for minority girls through this Cambridge Public Schools program. More details on our website: http://alumweb.mit.edu/groups/amita/SCG.
President’s Message from Sandy Yulke

“What is AMITA? Why should I join?” These are questions that I have been asked, and which I have spent a lot of time thinking about. I do not think there is one answer. But this is what the AMITA Bylaws say:

The objectives of the Association shall be (1) to provide a means for former women students of M.I.T. to maintain communication with each other and with the Institute, and to undertake such activities of common interest and purpose as are deemed appropriate by the membership; (2) to encourage high standards of achievement among the women students and to advance their general welfare; and (3) to maintain such relationships with the Institute as will support M.I.T.’s constructive role in our society.

For those women, like me, who graduated from MIT before 1980 (i.e. when the percentage of women students on campus was less than 20%) I think these objectives are self-evident, and AMITA is a way for alumnae to stay in touch with each other and keep track of issues at MIT affecting women (particularly students and faculty members.) But those in later classes, especially recent graduates, are less interested in a women’s organization like AMITA.

As women have become a greater percentage of both the student body and of the professional workforce, recent MIT alumnae do not look to AMITA for the same support that alumnae did in the past. But, I am hearing more and more younger alumnae ask about balancing career and family. Further, women who have been out 10 years or more are beginning to realize that the expectations and rewards for men and women in the workplace are still not the same.

These issues lead me to believe that the objectives established by the founders of AMITA in 1899 are valid today. Less than 10 years before I arrived at MIT as a freshman, there was a motion before the Faculty to discontinue accepting women as undergraduate students, because there was no housing for them. It was the leadership of AMITA at that time that went to Katherine Dexter McCormick, a life-long AMITA member, and asked her to donate the money for a women’s dormitory to insure the continued opportunity for women to study at MIT. Though I never lived in McCormick Hall, I (and all the women who have been undergraduates since 1962) benefited from this action.

In sitting down to write this year’s President’s message for AMITA, I read the one from last year. It still makes all the points that I think are important, and reflects what I have observed over the past year. There is one, very important additional point I would like to add now: AMITA is what the members make it. In the past, AMITA has organized career development conferences, programs to encourage girls to study math in high school, as well as celebrations of significant milestones in the history of women at MIT. The 100th anniversary of Katharine Dexter McCormick’s graduation this year provides us with another opportunity. (Go to http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/pill/peoplevents/p_mccormick.html for information on her contributions to the lives of women.) Celebrations could be regional, in conjunction with local MIT Clubs and/or an event in Cambridge. The AMITA Board is very interested in supporting these events, but we cannot accomplish them without the active involvement of the membership. If you are interested in working on events of the type that I have described, or have program or project ideas please contact me or another member of the Board, listed to the left.

One additional note, AMITA is now in a unique position—a woman will be president of MIT. Having worked with Prof. Hockfield in my job at Yale, I have witnessed her genuine interest in women in science, for example, she organized a Marie Curie centennial at Yale last year (see http://www.yale.edu/whc/pdf/MC_a.pdf). I have already written to ask her to make sure that a meeting with AMITA will be among her first alumni activities.

I look forward to hearing from you on this and other AMITA issues, and hope to meet more of you in the coming year.
MacArthur “Genius” Grant Awarded to Three Alumnae in 2003 and 2004

Amy Smith ’84, founder of the MIT IDEAS Competition, and Julie Theriot ’88, Assistant Professor at Stanford University, both received MacArthur Grants this year (2004). Amy Rosenzweig G’92, a tenured professor at Northwestern University, received a MacArthur Fellowship last fall (2003). The $500,000 award, given in equal installments over a five-year period, goes “to individuals who show exceptional merit and promise for continued and enhanced creative work. The program selects individuals of all ages and from all fields and offers recipients flexibility to pursue their work without reporting requirements.”


AMITA Student Award Winner News

The AMITA Board of Directors is very pleased to announce that there were two awards recipients for the 2004 AMITA Academic Award: Irit Rappley, a Brain and Cognitive Sciences/Linguistics and Philosophy major, and Sonya Tang, a Chemistry major. Factors considered in choosing the award recipient include depth and breadth of academic accomplishments as shown by grades, special projects or other academic responsibilities (such as teaching), and research. This year, the board was challenged to choose a winner, among many strong nominees from a variety of departments from across the Institute. Next year, three scholarships (with a total value of more than $28,350) are planned from our endowed fund which has a market value of over a half million dollars. You can designate that your gift to MIT go to this fund.

Elizabeth Bullard, one of the recipients of an AMITA scholarship for 2003-2004, sent a letter of thanks to AMITA. “I would like to thank you for AMITA’s endowment of the MIT Alumnae Scholarship Fund that has helped me to attend MIT…I am looking forward to this summer, when I will perform the research necessary for my thesis, and I will also fill out graduate school applications.” To read the full note, go to our website, http://alumweb.mit.edu/groups/amita/

Sampling of Last Year’s AMITA Events

“Biology, Law, and MIT” Dessert with Holly Heine ’67 Dec. 3, 2003 in McCormick Hall
Holly graciously shared her background, from Wellesley, to MIT to Grad school and the Senior Tutor at McCormick, to the Dean of Student's office and into the legal field, first as a technical specialist going to school on her company's support while raising two children. She answered some questions about the particulars of her job and asked some questions about how other people are doing.

AMITA Holiday Potluck Jan. 11, 2004 at McCormick Hall

IAP: Life after MIT - A Woman’s Perspective Jan. 29, 2003

Women’s Sports at MIT Jan. 31, 2003

AMITA Ice Cream Social at McCormick Thursday, April 22, 6:30-8:30 pm at McCormick Hall.
We discussed balancing life, work, and family, beginning with two or three of us sharing our experiences. It was a great opportunity to interact with undergraduates in a way that fulfills our mission. Plus ice cream and fun!

Chocolate Chemistry Workshop May 5, 7pm-9pm in the Bush Room
Over 75 women Graduate Students joined Alumnae in conducting experiments under the auspices of the Lab for Chocolate Science (http://web.mit.edu/chocolatiers/www/). Susan Born ’98, Chemical Engineering reprised her now-famous "Chocolate Sculpture" (see the February 11, “04 edition of "The New York Times") demonstrations of how to make and eat gourmet chocolates. Attendees learned that, like iron, chocolate has alpha and beta phases and needs to be tempered for optimum handling (and taste).

Annual Meeting
Prof. Lorna Gibson, Materials Science and Engineering spoke on “Women on the Faculty at MIT: What's happening 5 years after the first report.”
In November: Peer Mentoring, or “Be a career coach, get five personal career coaches in return”

Do you aspire for a personal career coach to help you address your most problematic work-related issue? Do you wish you had thoughtful, experienced advice for those thorny career development issues that arise constantly? Do you want to learn from other MIT Alumnae who have “been there, done that” on issues such as career advancement, work/life balance or moving toward retirement? Do you wish you had a personal “Board of Directors” for “You, Inc.”? If so, then this is the workshop for you! Come join other MIT Alumnae as we help you create peer mentoring teams.

Participants will learn how a coaching team can help further one’s career, how to participate effectively in a coaching team, how to ask better questions in order to maximize value from a coaching team, and how a single “value-add” email can get a five-fold “return on investment.” We will help all participants form coaching teams with other participants, and everyone can walk away with clear goals for continuing your personalized support team. AMITA members and current students receive special pricing. Find out more at http://alumweb.mit.edu/groups/amita/.

Renew your Membership or Join AMITA now!

Why should you join AMITA?

The Association of MIT Alumnae is dedicated to providing a means for former women students to maintain contact with each other and MIT. On campus, AMITA is active in supporting current women students at MIT with our various on campus activities. Off campus, AMITA events held in Boston, New York, San Francisco, and other cities are bringing together women from MIT for exciting and fun events.

AMITA also sponsors several student activities and awards, including the AMITA/MacVicar Oral History Project and the AMITA Senior Academic Award. The AMITA Senior Academic Award is given for achievement, and was established in 1958 to highlight the achievement of women students at the Institute. AMITA publishes a newsletter to keep our members up to date on what is happening with each other and at MIT, particularly with respect to women's issues. AMITA membership is available to any woman who has attended at least one semester at MIT as either an undergraduate or graduate student. You can also check the Alumni Office Smartrans webpage to sign up at https://alum.mit.edu/smarTrans/dues-login.vhtml?groupID=182.

To join AMITA by check, fill out this form and include the survey to the right.

Name: __________________________ Class Year: ________

Address: __________________________

City: __________ State: ________ Zip: ________

and send a check for $25 (or $350 for life membership) made out to AMITA to:

AMITA
C/O Kate Zebrose, Membership Chair
26 Josephine Ave
Somerville, MA 02144

For more information on joining AMITA, visit the website at http://alumweb.mit.edu/groups/amita/.

AMITA Survey

Please help AMITA serve you better in our services and programming by filling out this short questionnaire.

Question 1 Which of these types of events or activities are you most likely to attend? (Indicate 1,2,3, 1 being most interesting.)

___ Activism in women's issues
___ Career Development, networking
___ Continuing education
___ Family matters (marriage, children, balance)
___ Features of success stories by fellow alumnae
___ K-12 technology promotion
___ MIT recruiting
___ Promoting, preserving MIT women's history
___ Retirement planning
___ Socializing
___ Speakers
___ Student support
___ Support charitable organizations

Question 2 What kind of AMITA events have you attended in the past? Check all that apply.

___ Educational
___ Membership recruiting
___ MIT student support
___ Networking
___ Promotion of math and science in local schools

AMITA Jobs listserv

Are you looking for a job or know of a position that is available? Would you like to discuss career and life balance related issues? Join the AMITA Jobs listserv on the MIT alumni website or post your job description (don't forget location and contact information) to amita_jobs@mitvma.mit.edu. For any questions, please contact Sarah Simon at sarah.simon@alum.mit.edu.