President’s Message – Spring 2008  
Sarah Simon ‘72

Two years at the helm of this historic organization, AMITA. It’s been challenging to keep up with both alumnae and student activities, but I think our Association of MIT alumnae is beginning to be more noticed in the MIT Community. Our program organizers have taken us to start to meet the women faculty, start to keep up with undergrads in McCormick and Panhel, connect with Sloan grads and researchers, and create informal lunches and evening events in NYC and Norcal. I thank the Board and our volunteers for all their hard work.

But there’s lots more to be done before I can say that I’ve been able to work with you in helping AMITA become a more vibrant organization and perhaps a meaningful part of your life. If you vote me the opportunity to serve again, I hope that you will join me in attending, and even developing, programs and activities that can bring our wonderful alumnae together, or serve MIT students and those in the K-12 pipeline. Maybe we can better promote recognition of the incredible contributions of not only our “foremothers” but also our professionals and alumnae in the community today. There are some amazing alumnae out there, young and old, with wonderful stories to tell. Together, we can continue to show the world the wonderful stuff that MIT alumnae are made of!

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2008 AMITA Senior Academic Awards  – The Awards Committee, headed by Judy Fallows ’74, met on April 4 to review nominations. Two senior women students, Amanda Lanza and Alice MacDonald were selected for from among nine astounding applicants for the prize this year. They are judged on academic excellent, research and presentations, work experience and awards. Each received a $500 award check from AMITA.

An advisor in the Biology Department wrote this about Ms. Lanza, who plans to attend the Annual Meeting on June 7 in Cambridge: “Her primary concern has always been mastery of the material and building connections between concepts found in all of her classes. Amanda is quick to process vast quantities of information and readily synthesizes that information into an interesting idea, a terrific question or a new approach.”

From New York: NYC Chapter is keeping its members up to speed on local women’s professional and entrepreneurial meetings. One connection they’ve found is an angel investment group, Golden Seeds, that specializes in companies founded and/or run by women  http://www.goldenseeds.com/home/  . NYC Chapter is also looking for one or two Regional Vice Chairs of Membership to further expand our group. If you would like to get involved, please contact the Regional Chair of AMITA NY, Anusha Prasad ’03 at nush@alum.mit.edu. [Editor’s Note – Congrats and all the best, Anusha, on your upcoming studies at the Wharton School in Philadelphia! NYC AMITA will miss you!]
UPCOMING AMITA EVENTS

AMITA Annual Meeting

When: Saturday, June 7th, 2008
Where: MIT, Bush Room 77 Mass Ave.
Cambridge MA
Contact: Kim Vermeer (kvermeer@alum.mit.edu)
Contact Phone: 617-624-3930

AMITA’s Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday afternoon during Reunion Week. The meeting will feature the newest Ellen Swallow Richards Professor – Sara Seager of the Department of Earth and Planetary Science.

Sandy Yulke '74, nominating chair, will present the slate, and our annual election will be held. For those who cannot attend the meeting, see the ballot in a later part of this newsletter and return it to Sze-Wen Kuo at 17 Ledgewood Dr. Bedford, MA 01730 by June 8, 2008.

We're looking forward to seeing Lis Drake '57 and Toni Schumann '57, the next President of the Association of Alumni and Alumnae of MIT, as they come back to campus for their 50th Reunion.

Smartrans Link:
https://alum.mit.edu/smarTrans/user/Register.dyn?eventID=20834&groupID=182

Note that the Board has also voted to honor these 50th reunion women with a scarf to accompany their red jackets. We’ll have an informal meeting on Thursday afternoon 6/5, and hope this will be a good, and more stylish, substitute for the men’s grey and cardinal striped freshman ties!

If you are interested in helping out on an AMITA project - Women in Academia, Next Moves Career Groups, Oral Histories, etc - Contact any of our officers.

AMITA Programs Brainstorming Tele-call

When: May 20, 2008, 8:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Contact: Sarah Simon (sarah.simon@alum.mit.edu) for details.

Did you attend AMITA programs over the past few years that you've loved? Have ideas for programs you haven't seen on the schedule? Want to lead an event? The AMITA Board wants to hear about your interests and your ideas for our programs and activities for the coming year.

Can't attend? Email your thoughts to Sarah.

Alumnae Leadership Series:
Networking – from Research to the Real World

When: May 28, 2008, 7:30 AM – 9:30 AM
Where: Bldg E51, room 315
Wadsworth Street, Cambridge, MA
Contact: Rebecca Schechter (rebecca@alum.mit.edu)

Making networks work for you
Do you feel like networking is harder than it needs to be? This event is designed to invigorate or initiate your network.

Research shows that networking offers the most frequent path to career growth, whether it's a company to company transition or getting that prime assignment or promotion. Please join us for breakfast and a thought-provoking discussion on the value of and leverage from social networks as well as the specific skills you can practice to improve your personal effectiveness.

Our panel of experts will touch on the power of non-verbal communication in networking sessions and how you can plan and execute a deliberate networking strategy.

AMITA NorCal May Event:
Understanding Your Health It's Not Just For Men Anymore!

This important and informative event is only one week away! Forward this announcement to all the women in your networks.

When: May 22nd, 2008, Thursday
Time: 6:00 – 8:00pm
Venue: Room 83-1A, Genentech Inc.
Where: 611 Gateway Blvd, South San Francisco, CA 94080
Cost (includes dinner):
Register by 5/20: $20 MIT alums, $25 Others
Walk-ins: $25 MIT alums, $30 Others
Register at: https://alum.mit.edu/smarTrans/user/Register.dyn?eventID=22901&groupID=154
Contact: Radha Nayak (rnayak@alum.mit.edu)
(Space is limited - preregistration is strongly encouraged)
Hosted by Genentech.

It's been an exciting decade in Women's Health research – and the results can affect you. The efforts of pioneering researchers in the field will impact your life and the lives of all the women you care about, so come and hear about it.

Women’s health was mainly defined as reproductive health – a narrow and restrictive boundary and women were excluded from most clinical studies on major diseases such as heart disease and lung cancer. In the last decade, new research has addressed a spectrum of issues which touch every aspect of our lives.

Our speaker, Dr. Marcia Stefanick has been on the frontline of this revolution. She will talk about how our understanding has grown in a range of fields - hormone therapy, breast cancer, osteoporosis, aging, heart disease, child bearing. She will address the challenges and controversies in women's health research today. Come listen to her – it's your chance to be informed and be proactive, for your own health and the other important women in your life.

Speaker: Marcia Stefanick, PhD; Professor of Medicine, Stanford Prevention Research
Dr. Stefanick's bio will shortly be posted on our website
http://www.mitcnc.org/aminorcal-default.html
AMITA would like to thank Genentech and the MIT Club of Northern California for their support and sponsorship of this event.

AMITA NorCal Monthly Lunches
Free monthly events – see all upcoming ones at http://alumweb.mit.edu/groups/amita/BrowseWeb.do?webSiteId=SI000477&webPageId=P008
San Francisco Monthly Networking Lunch
Third Tuesday of every month, 12:00PM
RSVP to Alisa Mosler, alisa@alum.mit.edu
South Bay Monthly Networking Lunch
Third Tuesday of every month, 12:00PM
RSVP (not required) to Nicole Pelton, nskinner@alum.mit.edu
Peninsula Monthly Networking Lunch
First Tuesday of every month
RSVP by end of the first Monday of every month
to: Anh Thu Vo, avo@alum.mit.edu
408-218-0002 (cell)

AMITA Ballot with Slate of Candidates ’08-’10 and Report from the Nominating Committee:
from the bylaws: “President, Recording Secretary, Membership Committee Chairwoman, Treasurer and Student Awards committee Chairwoman shall be elected in even years”

President: Sarah Simon ’72, Course 1, Boston: For ___ Write-in ____________
Treasurer: Toby Bloom EE PhD ’83, Boston: For ___ Write-in ____________
Recording Secretary: Ekta Desai ’03, Courses 10C, 15, NYC For ___ Write-in ____________
Awards Comm. Chair: Uttara Marti ’03, Course 6.1, SM 6.3, NYC For ___ Write-in ____________
Membership Comm. Chair: Yolanda Fan ’02, Courses 10c, 7A, Baltimore For ___ Write-in ____________
Nominations Comm. Chair: Holly Heine ’67 Course 7, PhD ’73, Boston For ___ Write-in ____________
Nominations Comm. Members (2): Susan Rynerson, ’92 For ___ Write-in ____________
Gwen Acton, PhD ’91 For ___ Write-in ____________
Program Committee Chair: Maria Palmese ’87, Courses 5, 21, (NYC). For ___ Write-in ____________

The Board has discussed and proposes an addition to the AMITA bylaws, as follows:
Article VI Section 1
[at the end] “At the discretion of the Chair, the Nominating Committee may prepare alumna nominations and recommendations for MIT committees, Alumni Association committees or other entities, to be submitted on behalf of AMITA after approval of the President.” For ___ Against ____________
We propose this amendment because this year, the Nominating Committee Chair has recommended various alumnae for Alumni Association visiting committees and other posts. I think this has been an excellent effort that gets the AMITA name out there and more alumnae recognized. Because our by-laws only specify that the Nominating Committee prepares the slate of AMITA board members, this bylaws change will be adopted if it receive approval by three quarters of the members present at the Annual Meeting and the ballot voting.

If you cannot attend the Annual Meeting to vote in person, please fill out the above ballot and return to: Sze-Wen Kuo,

Thanks to this year’s nominating committee Sandra Yulke ’74, Cynthia Lubien, LS ’82, Catherine (Dunn) Nicholson ’02, Sze-wen Kuo, ’73, and Ekta Desai ‘03.

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**Past Events**

The Association of MIT Alumnae (AMITA) held a special wine and cheese reception, on May 12 at the American Museum of Natural History, for the newest Ellen Swallow Richards 1873 Chair [ESR] Associate Professor Sara Seager, MIT Department of Earth and Planetary Science. Cecily Selby ’51, provided some information for the group about ESR. The reception preceded a talk by Professor Seager sponsored by the MIT Club of NY.

*About the ESR Professorship:* With a total population of approximately 1,000 alumnae in the first 100 years, AMITA began the ESR Professor endowment to honor the centennial of Ellen Swallow’s degree. The chair was designed to bring tenured women to the MIT Faculty, which had only a handful of women professors at the time. The endowment was completed in 1976, and Professor Seager is the sixth woman to hold the chair.

Professor Seager models extrasolar planet atmospheres and studies the recombination epoch, 300,000 years after the big bang. [http://www.dtm.ciw.edu/seager/](http://www.dtm.ciw.edu/seager/)

**AMITA NYC: “Truth Values: One Girl’s Romp Through MIT’s Male Math Maze”**

AMITA NYC went to see fellow MIT alumna Gioia De Cari on May 14, at a performance of her show “Truth Values.” Ms. De Cari graduated in the late 80’s, from the Ph.D. program at MIT. She
taught at Harvard but swerved from Math to the Arts. Now the two collide in "Truth Values". 

Synopsis: A gifted young Berkeley chick takes on sexism while pursuing a math Ph.D at MIT, where girls aren't supposed to be girls...especially girls with a penchant for fighting back with fashion!

**NYC Post-Holiday Holiday Meet & Greet**

Wednesday, January 9, 2008

On Wednesday, January 9th 2008, AMITA NYC kicked off the year with a post-holiday holiday party at Anusha Prasad '03 's apartment in midtown Manhattan. Alice Cox '96, co-chair of the NYC programs, successfully planned the event that was attended by twelve alumnae with backgrounds and interests ranging from mechanical engineering and urban planning to finance, law, welding, sculpture, sketch comedy, and filmmaking! A light supper with pizza, salad, appetizers and wine was served.

To ensure everyone got to meet one another, we paired up, interviewed, and introduced our respective partners to the group. Outcomes of this meet and greet activity include career networking opportunities, Manhattan commuting advice, running buddies, information on where to take art classes, and ideas for future events. It was great to meet everyone and set the stage for a fun year to come of more AMITA NYC events!

**Life after MIT – Speed Networking**

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

AMITA hosted its annual “Speed Networking” event for students in the Bush Room on Wednesday evening, January 16, during IAP.

Attendees included about 10 alumnae and 30 students, 10 of whom were graduate students. Alumnae hosted tables where topics of discussion were careers in Engineering (Nancy Timmerman '74), Environment (Julie Goodman '96), Business (Deborah Theobold '95), Biotech/Life Science (Julie Schwedock '85), as well as general topics for Entrepreneurs, Alternate Paths, Work & Life (Bhuvana Husain '00), and Spirituality at work (Susan Rynerson '92). The event began at 6:30 pm with pizza, salad and drinks, free for the students. Then the group self selected into groups around some of the topics, and switched topics and groups as the evening went on. Students switched tables and flowed in and out of the event throughout the evening. In the end, a full group wrap-up discussion included a significant amount of conversation around balancing career and family.

**AMITA Women in Biotech Series: Evolution of a scientist from academia to industry to CEO**

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

At the "Evolution of a Scientist" Women in Biotech event in Cambridge on March 25, Dr. Julie Olson, PhD, '76, shared some very personal and intimate aspects of her journey from post-doc to CEO of Mersana, Inc. Dr. Olson painted a very real-life picture for us of the obstacles that professional women face, how she dealt with them, and how that has informed how she deals with her employees as CEO.

Not excited by the prospect of writing grants and scurrying for tenure, Dr. Olson took a look at industry and discovered her love of pharmaceutical R&D at Pfizer. At Pfizer she was supported
professionally and her knack for strategic thinking opened up management opportunities. Even so, she was scared to tell her boss the first time she became pregnant, and the very real fear of not being taken seriously caused her to take only a three week maternity leave. Indeed, during her second three-week maternity leave, they gave away her office and moved her to less desirable quarters!

Now a mother of two, she continued to be a valuable employee at Pfizer by using her time wisely and effectively rather than working long hours. She was clearly successful and continued to be promoted until she found she was a Vice President in what had become a fortune 100 company! However, she also found herself far removed from the aspects of the pharmaceutical industry that excited her. So she became a consultant, and during that time learned of a small company that was “fixing” orphan cancer drugs, and selling the improved product to big pharma. She was so energized by this company that she went on board and became CEO, where she still is today. Times and attitudes have changed somewhat, thanks to the trail-blazing of Dr. Olson and women like her. We thank her for her candid presentation.

AMITA's Women's Sports Day, Saturday, January 19, 2008

January 19 was a great day for the home team at Tech. Hockey, Track, and Swimming all defeated their foes, while Gymnastics came out with 2 wins and only one check in the Loss column. Support from the AMITA cheering section couldn't have hurt as a dozen alumnae gathered to watch the Engineers get it done on home turf of all kinds. Earlier in the day, many of those same alumnae and family took advantage of the exercise facilities available at the Zesiger Center. Throughout the afternoon, alumnae from the past 37 years enjoyed refreshments and socializing sponsored by AMITA in the Zesiger Center. To round out the day, several members of the Hockey team came by after their victory to say hello and meet their new fans. We're already making plans for next year and hope to see you then.

AMITA NYC: Anne M. Mulcahy, Chairman and CEO of Xerox
Mondy, February 11, 2008

Ten MIT alumnae and one alumna husband braved the brutal winter weather for a family-style Italian meal on the upper east side of Manhattan. After sharing garlic spinach, fried calamari, penne and conversation, the group headed to the 92nd Street Y to hear Anne Mulcahy share her experiences as the CEO of Xerox Corp. With the moderation of the editor-in-chief of BusinessWeek, Stephen Adler, the group of eleven gained insights into topics ranging from Xerox's innovative business strategies to Ms. Mulcahy's political affiliations to understanding the personal side of one of the world's most powerful women.
ESR Birthday Party
Sunday December 2, 2007

At the AMITA Holiday Potluck and Ellen Swallow Richards (ESR) Birthday celebration on December 2, students, alumni and guests were treated to some inspiring anecdotes about the life and accomplishments of MIT's first female student.

A prominent ESR biographer, Mr. Robert Clarke, regaled the crowd with stories of the founding of MIT, then Boston Tech, by Utopian scientists who believed in equal access for all individuals interested in science, a stark contrast to the science and technology initiatives by MIT's more conservative neighbor institutions. Despite having the support of MIT's leadership and founders, ESR was ostracized by the faculty and relegated to a separate isolated laboratory in the basement. She survived and excelled on her own initiative. She became Massachusetts' foremost environmental chemistry expert while still an undergraduate, establishing much of what is now known as environmental science.

It was a wonderful evening spent meeting other alumnae and current students, and sharing stories about the women who have shaped and will continue to shape MIT. Happy Birthday Ellen!

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Alumnae in the News

Paula Hammond '84 named Bayer Professor in Chemical Engineering

Paula Hammond has been named the MIT Bayer Professor in Chemical Engineering thanks to a three-year, $300,000 grant from the Bayer Foundation. The grant continues Bayer's support of the Bayer Professorship in Chemical Engineering and the Bayer Graduate Fellowship, which it first began in 1979, through its philanthropic arm, the Bayer Foundation.

Hammond's research in macromolecular design and synthesis, directed assembly and nanoscale design of materials has wide-ranging potential applications for various products, processes and technologies in a number of industries.


MIT Alumnae involved in two of top 10 physics stories of 2007


Two research projects involving MIT physicists are among the top ten physics stories of the year, as ranked by the American Institute of Physics.

Nergis Mavalvala and Jocelyn Monroe

Among the year's highlights is research led by Nergis Mavalvala, associate professor of physics at MIT and a member of MIT's LIGO (Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory) Laboratory. In April, Mavalvala and others reported that they had cooled a coin-sized object to 0.8 degrees Kelvin (0.8 degrees above absolute zero).

Also on the American Institute of Physics' top-ten list is the MinibooNE experiment, which confirmed a critical aspect of the Standard Model of Particle Physics. MIT postdoctoral associate Jocelyn Monroe, a Pappalardo Fellow, was a member of the MinibooNE research team and presented the results April 11 at MIT.

Alumna Katherine Swartz ’72 elected to the Institute of Medicine

Katherine Swartz, Professor of Health Policy and Economics at the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH), has been elected to the Institute of Medicine. The Institute was established in 1970 by the National Academy of Sciences and provides independent, scientifically informed analysis and recommendations on human health issues. Elected members commit to spending a significant amount of time as volunteers on IOM committees, which engage in a broad range of studies on health policy issues.

Swartz focuses her research on the population of people without health insurance and on efforts to increase access to health care coverage; on the reasons for and the ways to control care that involves extremely high expenditures; and on how the US might restructure the way in which Americans pay for health insurance coverage.

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**AMITA Member updates**
We like to hear from you, our members. Do you have updates on the personal or professional level? Please write in and let us know about it. Your news will appear in the next edition of our newsletter.

**AMITA WEB LOGO Design Contest**
Thanks to those of you who submitted an entry to AMITA's Web LOGO Design Contest! Gwelle Boissiere, ’98, a former AMITA program chair and website expert, sent a modern looking, two photo layout that will be adapted for our new Banner. The Board is looking for pictures of real alumnae or women students in the lab and in activities on campus. Send them along to Sze-wen Kuo.

AMITA’s network of alumnae of all ages is eager to connect with you and support you on concerns we all share. Connect!