

ACT and Region Medical Women's Society Newsletter

Newsletter Number 40

<http://afmw.org.au/act>

August 2010

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Dr Liz Gallagher

Message from the President



Hi to all MWS members!

Just a short message from the Prez. 2011 is well underway and our Committee has been busy setting our calendar of events for the year as well as setting ourselves some targets. We hope we have put together a programme of events to suit all tastes and encourage you to come along to our functions, and to introduce new members to our society. It is a fantastic way to meet and support our colleagues and I have certainly made some good friends over the years.

Thanks to all of you who were able to get to our cocktail party, and an even bigger thanks to Vida and Rod for their hospitality. Our biggest coup this year (thanks to Marjorie Cross) is to secure Dr Stephen Bergman aka Samuel Shem and his wife to speak at our fund raising dinner. This will be held on 12/7/11 and you will find details later in the news letter. As we did not hold a fund raiser last year we have not been able to send much money to the charities we have elected to support, so we are hoping to be able to make that up this year. The Fundraiser dinner and

**ACT and Region Medical Women's Society
PO Box 178, CAMPBELL 2612**

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DIARY 2011

5th May—The Juggle for Medical Students

12th July – Fundraising Dinner with Guest speaker "Samuel Shem"

19th October—Presentation Dinner @ The Lobby

November—AGM

auction will be open to the wider medical community, so please spread the word.

Please also remember that as a member of MWS-ACT you are also a member of the Australian Federation of Medical Women who has a national role in advocating for the role of women both within Australia and Internationally. Jane has included information about the activities of AFMW and you should all have access to their website.

Liz Gallagher
President, Medical Women's Society of the ACT and Region.

Editor's column

Contributors sought

Hello and welcome another edition of our (ir)regular Newsletter. This is a learning process but many of the delays are due to lack of material for publication. Travel advice and adventures, book reviews, notices and information are all very welcome.

In this newsletter we learn about the many faces of Stephen Bergman (AKA Samuel Shem).

There is also a message from the President of AFMW.

In this edition of the Newsletter, there are the minutes and financial report from the last AGM. The MWS ACT and Region is in good shape with a thriving membership. However, we are here for you, so please let us know what you want

Jane Twin

MWS ACT and Region Committee 2011

President

Liz Gallagher

Vice President

Sue Packer

Treasurer

Ann Hosking

Assistant Secretary

Jill Hutton

Membership Secretary

Julie Hewitt

Newsletter Secretary

Jane Twin

Committee

Simone Campbell

Marjorie Cross

Susie Close

Kate Drummond

Felicity Williams

GP Representative

Jennie Bromley

Student Reps

Yin Lan Soon

Phoebe Moore

Corrine Lu

Aodhamair Lenagh-Maguire

Kyra Clifton

Young Doctors Reps

Moniza Kumar

Anita Hutchison

Ivy Tan

The 2011 Committee hard at work planning the visit of Stephen Bergman and Janet Surrey



The Committee usually meet every 4 to six weeks at someone's home. Currently, the venue is Liz's home in Pearce. We arrive straight from work, so we bring along snacks to keep us sane. We have great fun while attending to the important business.

However, some of you may have noticed that we are "shuffling deck chairs", with the occasional new member. We would love for members to put up their hands to join the camaraderie of the committee

MEDICAL WOMEN'S SOCIETY OF THE ACT AND REGION

Has great pleasure in inviting the Medical
Community of the ACT and Region to our
Charity Auction and Dinner

An evening with Samuel Shem

Special guest speakers

***Dr Stephen Bergman (AKA Samuel Shem,
Author of House of God)
and***

When: Tuesday, 12th July 2011

Time: 7.00 for 7.30 pm

Where: The Great Hall, University House

Cost: Members \$120.00

Non-members \$130.00

Dress: Cocktail

Our charities include:

The Mercy Ships, ZOPOM (Mitare orphanage in Zimbabwe), the ANU Fiji Village Project, Hospital in Sierra Leone

I would like to attend the MWS of ACT and Region Charity Dinner and Auction

Name:

Contact tel. no.

Dietary requirements:

Payment method: (strictly by 5th July)

"cheque, made out to MWS of ACT & Region

"electronic transfer to account no. 010052394 BSB 062905. Name of account: _____

Post to Dr Ann Hosking, 53 Cobby St, Campbell, ACT, 2612

E-mail - anngeo@ozemail.com.au

Member _____ Non Member _____

Student _____

Amount paid \$ _____

Samuel Shem Biography

Samuel Shem, is the pen name of Stephen Bergman, a doctor, novelist, playwright and activist. He wrote the classic novel about medical internship, THE HOUSE OF GOD (1978) and the sequel MOUNT MISERY (1996).

He graduated with a M.D. from Harvard Medical School and completed his Ph.D. as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University. He was on the faculty of Harvard Medical School for 35 years.

Shem, has been referred to as "the comic genius and the holy terror of medicine," "Rabelaisian," and "the raucous and insightful physician of the soul."

THE HOUSE OF GOD (1978) was named by The Lancet as one of the most important American medical novels of the 20th century. The sequel, MOUNT MISERY (1996), about psychiatric residency, has been called "another medical classic".

His novel THE SPIRIT OF THE PLACE (2008) won the National Best Book Award 2008 in General Fiction and Literature from USA Book News, and the Independent Publishers National Book Award in Literary Fiction 2009.

In 2007, he and his wife Janet Surrey won the Performing Arts Award by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence for the off-Broadway hit play "Bill W. and Dr. Bob" about the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous. In 2009, the couple also won the Boston Interfaith Council's Paradigm Shift Award for the nonfiction book "We Have to Talk: Healing Dialogues Between Women and Men"

Shem has been honored as one of Boston Public Library's "Literary Lights," as one of "Boston's Best Authors," and as a speaker at the Hemingway Centennial Celebration at the JFK Library. He has received the Vanderbilt University Medal of Merit.

References

Pennington, C, "Samuel Shem Is the Guest Speaker for 2010 Commencement Address" Health Centre Today, February 11, 2010.

The Official Web Site of Samuel Shem, "About the Author" <http://www.samuelshem.com/v2/about/>

Yin Lan Soon Med 4



Stephen Bergman with partner, Janet Surrey



Australian Federation
of **Medical Women**
the voice of Australian medical women

*The voice of medical women advocating for,
and supporting, the health and welfare of our
local, national and international communities.*

Did you know that when you join the ACT and Region Medical Women's Society you become a member of the Australian Federation of Medical Women?

About AFMW

The AFMW offers our members, colleagues and the community access to the collective knowledge and experiences of medical women. The AFMW seeks to ensure equity and equality for women doctors, so as to achieve their potential throughout all stages of their professional and personal lives. AFMW also seeks to improve the health of all Australians, especially women and children.

In 1896 Australia's first medical women's society was formed by an inspiring group of ten Victorian female doctors, including Constance Stone. The AFMW was formed in 1927 and is a not for profit, politically neutral, non sectarian, non government organisation.

Today the AFMW offers an important network for female doctors in all regions of Australia. AFMW membership is automatic for doctors who are members of their affiliated state medical women's society; medical women can join AFMW directly where they have no active local State Society. Full membership is open to registered female medical practitioners of Australia. Associate membership includes non-registered female medical practitioners and medical students.

Membership Entitlements:

- Leadership development, networking and mentoring opportunities
- The opportunity to become actively involved in key issues surrounding the health and wellbeing of women and children, in Australia and globally
- Automatic membership of the Medical Women's International Association, an organization with United Nations representation
- Attend educational and social events
- Join the AFMW leadership skills database
- Receive updates and e-newsletters from AFMW

To ensure you receive emails from AFMW please visit <http://afmw.org.au> and subscribe to the AFMW quarterly e-newsletter. While you are there, check out the new, improved AFMW website!

To find out more about Medical Women's International visit <http://mwia.net>.

Dr Desiree Yap



AFMW President's Report April 2011:

Summary:

- **'Saving Lives at Birth - A Grand Challenge for Development' Project. (MWIA)**
- **MWIA Western Pacific Conference in Tokyo cancelled due to the Earthquake and Tsunami Disaster**
- **World Vision has requested AFMW become supporters of the 'Child Health Now community initiative'**
- **Growth of the AFMW Leadership database**
- **AFMW representation at the Victorian Honour Roll of Women event**
- **Launch of the AFMW 'Thank You Initiative'**
- **AFMW email-out to all rural students**
- **AFMW is pursuing Sex Discrimination exemption and Tax Deductible Status**
- **AFMW applying to UNDPINGO for affiliation**

AFMW is well into the swing of 2011 and there are a number of exciting developments to bring to your attention.

From MWIA we have the opportunity to participate in putting together a proposal for the **'Saving Lives at Birth - A Grand Challenge for Development' Project**. In brief, USAID, Government of Norway, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Grand Challenges Canada, and The World Bank have joined together to call for ground-breaking prevention and treatment approaches for pregnant women and newborns in poor, rural communities around the time of childbirth. Of the estimated 3.2 million stillbirths, 3.6 million neonatal deaths and 360,000 maternal deaths that occur globally each year, a major gap for intervention exists around childbirth and in the early postnatal period – a time when mothers and babies are most vulnerable and global progress in reducing mortality has been particularly poor. Innovative prevention and treatment approaches are needed across three main domains: (1) Science & technology; (2) Service delivery; and (3) Demand-side innovation that empowers pregnant women and their families to practice healthy behaviors. These investments in high-risk, potentially high-return projects are aimed to identify and support transformational approaches to women's and newborns' health that can be scaled up to dramatically – and sustainably – reduce deaths and poor birth outcomes for millions of women and newborns in the hardest to reach communities of the world. More information regarding this exciting project is available at <http://savinglivesatbirth.net/> and if you are interested in contributing to the MWIA proposal please email me at president@afmw.org.au.

On a more somber note, the MWIA Tokyo Western Pacific Conference has been cancelled as a consequence of the devastating Earthquake then Tsunami which befell Japan. AFMW and a number of the States have sent condolences to the Japanese Medical Women's Society.

In other news AFMW has received a request for AFMW to become supporters of the 'Child Health Now community initiative' via World Vision and we are continuing to grow the leadership database <http://afmw.org.au/images/afmwleadershipdatabaseform.doc> and we continue encourage members to register their interest. I also attended the Victorian Honour Roll of

Women event, held on Wed 16th March 2011. In case you are unaware, "*The Victorian Honour Roll of Women is so important as it acknowledges and celebrates the achievements of inspirational women in Victoria and ensures that the legacy of these women is recorded and passed on to future generations,*" <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/women/victorian-womens-honour-roll>.

I am proud to be able to be involved with the launch of the AFMW 'Thank You Initiative Project' where you nominate a Mentor to 'officially' thank and we send a certificate to them on your behalf. I think it is very important to acknowledge those people who went out of their way to help us – even and perhaps especially, when they may not have appreciated what an impact they have had on our lives. There is more on this initiative later in this newsletter.

An email-out to all the rural student's societies with the AFMW free newsletter subscription offer has seen new student members join the AFMW – i.e. new WA student member. My vision is to facilitate the States that are currently inactive to collect enough AFMW members so as to be able to activate their own State groups. Until then direct AFMW members can articulate with AFMW and also utilise their 'buddy State' organisations.

AFMW is continuing to grow its presence in the market place with promotional flyers being accepted into numerous conference satchels. We are also pursuing Tax Deductible Status as well as an official Sex Discrimination exemption. If anyone is interested in understanding either of these processes then please contact me on president@afmw.org.au.

Lastly, we are also putting in an application for AFMW to independently be an organisation affiliated with the UN DPINGO. This will allow us to send 6 adult and 2 youth members to any of their meetings. The next DPINGO Conference (The Department of Public Information, NGO Section) is its annual congress in Bonn, Germany 3-5 September 2011.

**World Medical Association Council
Sydney Australia 6-8 April 2011**

Report by Dr Susanne Close, FRANZCOG, MWIA Delegate

The opportunity to attend the 188th WMA Council Session in Sydney, Australia was very welcome, and for me exciting. { How often would you get excited about sitting in a cold Meeting room with:

- 70 Male Physicians
- 9 Female Physicians, representing their countries,

- 9 Male Support Staff
- 8 Female Support Staff

8 Male Physicians on the Executive, e.g. Secretary General, President, Treasurer, Immediate Past President...

The Legal Advisor on the Executive is a woman.

9 Male Physician observers, one male non Physician observer, and

2 Female Physicians, Dr Gabrielle Casper and myself, Dr Susie Close, representing Associate organizations.

This is 2011 - 87 male Physicians, 11 female Physicians,

And people keep asking me:

WHY DO WE NEED A SEPARATE WOMEN DOCTORS ORGANISATION?

OK, now I have your attention, the meeting ran smoothly, with absolutely no sign of discrimination on any grounds, and our female colleague, Dr Torunn Janbu of Norway, chaired the Medical Ethics Committee}.

I would like to say a very serious thank you to Dr Shelley Ross, Secretary General of MWIA and Dr Afua Hess, President of MWIA for writing to the WMA on my behalf, and requesting that I attend as an official delegate. If you take time off work, pay for your own travel and accommodation, and then are not allowed to speak, well I think most of the MWIA members would understand my hesitation. However, with the support of MWIA, my fee to attend the conference was covered by the WMA, and we were welcome to contribute expert knowledge to the debates.

This meeting built on the experience of attending the 63rd Annual United Nations Department of Public Information / Non Government Organisations Conference in Melbourne Australia, in late August 2010.

The Council Meeting was opened on WORLD HEALTH DAY by the Australian Federal Minister for Health, The Hon. Nicola Roxon, who chose the opportunity to announce Australia is set to become the first country in the world to introduce plain packaging for cigarettes.

Tobacco companies will only be allowed to print their brand name in a specific style, and will have to remove all coloured logos and imagery from 2012, in a Federal Government bid to reduce smoking rates.

Health warnings and graphic pictures depicting the dangers of smoking will remain.

WMA council has made recommendations to have less promotion, and increased controls on cigarette smoking for all countries. These recommendations are expected to be approved by the general assembly in Uruguay.

With that auspicious start, the meeting got underway, the three standing committees reporting to Council were:

- Medical Ethics Committee
- Socio-Medical Affairs Committee
- Finance and Planning Committee,

WMA Council then votes on these reports after robust debate, to either recommend, or not, matters to be considered for passing by the General Assembly in Montevideo, Uruguay October 2011. The highlight for me, not surprisingly, were the Ethics Committee reports and debates.

WMA is tackling the issues of Counterfeit Medication, Chronic Illness, and the Council has put forward recommendations on ethical issues of Advanced Care Planning, End of Life Care/Dying with Dignity, which again will be almost certainly passed at the WMA General Assembly.

In no particular order, the hot topics were:

Physicians assisting, or participating in Executions. The WMA has previously passed resolutions, similar to MWIA, condemning this activity. However recent events in the USA, where, due to Thiopental no longer being produced in the USA itself, this drug was to be imported to several States for the purpose of Execution. A motion to criticize importation for this eventuality brought the topic to such fresh and very strong debate.

An address by the Inaugural President of the Advanced Care Planning Society was helpful in clarifying the issues around end of life care. WMA used such experts, who were not council members, to good effort. All recommendations excluded assisted dying, and, it was reported that effective end of life planning has guided patients away from that option, when they felt they had control over their own dying.

WMA does NOT support embargos and blockades on conflict disrupted countries when these measures increased poverty, and caused lack of medical supplies, thereby worsening the situation for the most vulnerable.

Greening meetings, using paperless communication, was universally supported, and a proposed WMA statement on the professional and ethical usage of social media was discussed, as privacy and the ability to quickly disseminate information to a large number of people are potential problems for medical discussions.

Use of social networking sites and similar technologies in medicine need consideration as legal, let alone ethical guidelines are playing catch up.

Issues around Physician Safety, and obligations to treat violent patients, and patients where the family were violent were discussed, and the importance of all governments providing safe conditions in which to work.

Cautious and careful financial management meant the Global Economic Crisis (GEC), had not dented the WMA economic viability, so they continue to function and produce finance for projects.

Over the last years, but more so recently, the Secretary General reported a sharp increase in enquiries to the WMA for advice to countries on Ethical and Social issues.

It was a wonderful lesson for me in how to chair and run procedures on resolutions. I hope to have some dialogue with the Korean Medical Association, and the MWIA secretariat on improving technological communication techniques at our meetings, which include appropriate fiscal consideration.

I will be making the Ethics Resolutions Committee work hard to bring resolutions to the General Assembly in a well thought out and well phrased manner, which I have learned can be done by committee in a way that enhances the original proposal from the member country, and will allow clearer recognitions of where the proposal and the spirit of the resolution come from, and have less chance of missing out on good debate.

Smoking, and exposure of Children to its dangers were discussed. As the American Paediatric society is currently working on this, I hope the USA come to the next MWIA Congress in Korea with a resolution on this.

At the WMA meeting, MWIA was invited to join them in presenting on Female Genital Mutilation at the WHO Assembly.

In discussing procedural matters, the issue of a proxy for absent members, and when non Physician members were able to vote were discussed and voted down. Prof. Vivienne Nathanson from the United Kingdom amused all with anecdotes of attending meetings where the representatives sent were lawyers not doctors, although the debates were interesting they were not about improved patient outcomes. WMA council also considered how best to eliminate, and stand down Office Bearers that bring disrepute to the organisation.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to attend this Council Session,

Dr Susie Close

10 April 2011

The AFMW Thank You Initiative

Do you have a teacher, mentor or senior colleague who has made an invaluable contribution to your medical journey?

AFMW recognises the many physicians who help our members through outstanding teaching, mentoring or instruction. We have established the **AFMW Thank You Initiative** to give our members a way to formally recognise and express their gratitude for the invaluable contributions of their mentors and teachers.

How it works:

- You nominate a mentor, teacher or senior colleague for the Thank You Initiative.
- The nominated individual will receive an individualised Thank You certificate from AFMW on your behalf, signed by the AFMW President.
- The nominated individual's name will be placed on the AFMW Thank You Wall at our website and listed in the AFMW newsletter.
- Each AFMW member is entitled to nominate 1 individual annually.
- Additional nominations can be purchased at \$50 per nomination.

What we need to receive from you

1. Your name and email address
2. The name and mailing address of the individual you wish to thank (including their title; if the individual is not a doctor please let us know)
3. The state medical women's society you are a member of (eg QMWS or a state member of AFMW)

Send these details to afmw@afmw.org.au and we will do the rest!

Your privacy is important to AFMW. Your contact details and those of the individual you nominate will not be shared with a third party.

Be your own best friend

"I'm hopeless!" Karen exclaimed. "The house is a mess, the kids are out of control and I'm always making mistakes at work. I feel exhausted and burned out, and there just never seems to be enough hours in the day to get everything done!"

What would you say to Karen if she was your best friend?

You might point out that Karen does an amazing job juggling the roles of mother, partner, friend, daughter, employee, house-keeper and more. Maybe you would suggest that she take a break from worrying about everyone else for a change and do something that makes her happy. If this sounds familiar then congratulations, you are a good and wise friend. The challenge now is to apply these same concepts of kindness and acceptance when *you* start to become too self-critical.

Psychologist Dr Mandy Deeks from the Jean Hailes Foundation for Women's Health believes many women can relate to feeling overwhelmed and inadequate. According to Dr Deeks, "Women are much better at criticizing, rather than congratulating themselves. Sometimes it can be very helpful to take a step back, recognise our achievements, big or small, and pat ourselves on the back." Dr Deeks believes too many women have unrealistic expectations of themselves. "It's important for women to realise that put-

yourself first is not selfish, because taking time out to relax and rejuvenate is essential for overall health and wellbeing. It actually helps give you the energy to be there for everyone else."

How to be your own best friend:

- When someone gives you a compliment, try to say thank you rather than protesting or putting yourself down.
- Try to set realistic goals and take pride in achieving them, no matter how small.
- Make time for yourself; even 10 minute blocks scattered throughout the day can be helpful.
- Prioritise. Try not to take on more than you can handle and remember it is ok to say no.

Think about what you might say to a friend if she/he was in the same situation and then take that advice yourself!

For more information on emotional health and wellbeing, contact The Jean Hailes Foundation for Women's Health on 1800 151 441 or visit www.healthforwomen.org.au

The Jean Hailes *Foundation*
for women's health

Partner Rape: Know about it, Respond effectively, Prevent it

Partner Rape is an educational film for health and legal professionals, for women affected by partner rape, for men's groups and for the community. It is based on the 2008 research report, *Raped by a Partner*.

The DVD can be viewed online (<http://whealth.com.au>) and is available free from Women's Health Goulburn North East thanks to funding from Wesnet (Women's Services Network). For a copy of the DVD, report, postcards and further information contact Women's Health Goulburn North East - **Tel:** 03 5722 3009, **Email:** whealth@whealth.com.au.

The Partner Rape Report can also be downloaded free online or ordered from WHGNE (<http://whealth.com.au>) at a cost of \$25 (includes postage).

You can now find us on Facebook!

Join the Canberra Medical Women's Society and Australian Federation of Medical Women Facebook Groups and *network online with medical women just like you*

Sign up for your free AFMW e-newsletters!

Are you receiving e-newsletters from the Australian Federation of Medical Women (AFMW)? If not, visit the AFMW website at <http://afmw.org.au> to subscribe free of charge online! The AFMW website contains a wealth of information about activities and events relevant to you, so do yourself a favour and visit today!

Mother and Daughter Doctor Heroes

Have you heard about the "Saints of Somalia"? Check out the inspiring video of Dr. Hawa Abdi and her daughter Deqo Mohamed at the TED website as they discuss their medical clinic in Somalia, where -- in the face of civil war and open oppression of women -- they've built a hospital, a school and a community of peace. Then, browse all the amazing and inspirational talks at the TED website (<http://www.ted.com>) about everything from street art to global health.

Link: http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/mother_and_daughter_doctor_heroes_hawa_abdi_deqo_mohamed.html



Farm Health and Safety Resources for Health Professionals

Research shows that farming is one of Australia's most dangerous industries. The health and safety of farmers, their support workers and their families is a major factor in the continued sustainability of rural and regional Australia. Doctors can play a significant role in fostering a greater awareness of the importance of farm safety, and especially in encouraging farmers to take better care of their health. As part of the Farming and Fishing Health and Safety (FFHS) Collaborative Partnership, there are more than 30 free publications to help doctors understand the issues involved and how they can be addressed. The publications include "Living Longer on the Land", "The Health and Safety of Older Farmers in Australia - The Facts", "Respiratory Illness in Australian Farmers" and "Testing and Delivering Media Communication Strategies for Child Farm Safety".

Link: <https://rirdc.infoservices.com.au/collections/ffhs>

