

# INSIDER

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...



Kathe Albrecht

Happy New Year! I hope you had a relaxing Holiday Season and that you are ready for 2024. I know you are eager to open up the Winter issue of the *Insider* newsletter. It is filled with the latest chapter news and some great photos from our recent events. Learn about our fun and lively Holiday Party, held on December 3 at the home of **Margaret and Dan Dudas**. What a festive and merry event that was, with the Dudas home beautifully decorated for Christmas. Over sixty guests, all in their holiday attire, enjoyed delicious food and lively conversation. What a wonderful way to celebrate the season. Also highlighted in this issue is our recent field trip to the Scripps Institution of Oceanography's Sally Ride Research Vessel. Attendees climbed all over the vessel, visiting the captain's bridge, checking out the navigational instrumentation, talking in the galley with the staff, looking at the research supplies being brought on board by scientists preparing for an upcoming trip. It was an eye-opening tour—we were impressed with the level of planning and coordination, the careful management of incredibly advanced research tools and gear, that is necessary to oversee such important research trips. We finished the meet-up with a delightful lunch at Bali Hai restaurant. Read about the details of our visit on the following pages. Also highlighted in the following pages are the UCSD and USD check presentation ceremonies, as well as the Scholar Picnic. The Scholar Picnic provided the opportunity for new and returning Scholars to get to know each other while enjoying a lovely meal at the home of **Catie Madani**. Members of the University Relations Committee hosted the gathering, which was a huge success. You will read about our Fall General meeting, during which our newest Scholars were introduced to ARCS members as they told us about their research and their personal academic journeys.

Also, I know you will enjoy the news and information about our current Scholars and Scholar Alums. Learn about research, conference involvement, promotions, and awards. Our Scholars and our Alums continue to make such an impact on the world of science.

I remind you that the Winter General Meeting will be held on January 30 at the La Jolla Country Club. Please register online when the invitation is sent out. See you there!

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And thank you for your continued commitment to the chapter. 2023 was a wonderful ARCS year and I look forward to 2024.

Enjoy the *Insider*!

Kathe Albrecht, President  
ARCS Foundation, San Diego Chapter

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### Holiday Party (December 3, 2023)

ARCS members, spouses and friends gathered in the beautiful home of **Margaret & Dan Dudas** in early December to kick off the holiday season. It was an evening filled with laughter, warmth, and good cheer, as reflected in these photos taken by **Leslie Bruce!**





## UCSD Check Presentation (November 28, 2023)

**Holly Heaton** shared this report from the traditional check presentation at UC San Diego, along with some wonderful photos. Enjoy!

Dean of Graduate Education and Postdoc Affairs **Dr. Jim Antony** kicked off the event by thanking ARCS for its long-term relationship with and support of UCSD and its Scholars and mentioning some of the incredible successes of UCSD in science and research.

**Dr. Corinne Peek-Asa**, Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation, also spoke about the importance of scientific research and Scholar development, and the gratitude the University has for ARCS. Dr. Peek-Asa and **Kathe Albrecht** both spoke of the long relationship and the fact that over the past 36 years ARCS has given over \$6 million to 370 outstanding Scholars.



**Holly Heaton** and **Pam Werner** spoke briefly as UCSD liaisons about their pride in being associated with our amazing Scholars and the fact that UCSD is one of the best and most impressive public universities in the country.

Many of our 50 Scholars attended along with some advisors and other UCSD personnel. ARCS

was represented by Kathe, **Catie Madani**, Pam, Holly and **Elizabeth Taft**. One of our newest members, **Kelsey Dale**, the VP of Development at LJI, also attended, to support its Scholar, **Sonya Haupt. B. Bea Rajombath**, Director, Graduate and Postdoctoral Services at Salk, also attended since ARCS now has Salk Scholars through its affiliation with UCSD.



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## UCSD Check Presentation

(November 28, 2023)... Continued from Page 3

Dr. Peek-Asa highlighted four Scholars: Sonya Haupt, LJI, who is studying the body's adaptive immune response to vaccines and infection with **Dr. Shane Crotty**. She also mentioned three new Scholars: **Wilfredo Gabriel Gonzalez Rivera**, Biomedical Informatics, a first generation university graduate from Puerto Rico; **Jessica Wan**, Climate Sciences, and **Rayyan Gorashi**, Bioengineering, who is studying sex-specific mechanisms in cardiovascular disease.



After the event we learned that Jessica's advisor is **Katherine (Kate) Ricke**, who was **Beth Wainwright's** (Beth is our National President) Scholar at ARCS Foundation Pittsburgh Chapter fifteen years ago; it's a small world after all!

UCSD rolled out the red carpet for us and there was good energy and excitement as we start another academic year.



## Field Trip to Sally Ride Research Vessel (November 2, 2023)



Several ARCS members and friends were treated to a fascinating tour of the Sally Ride Research Vessel in Point Loma in early November. Kudos to **Leslie Bruce, Jayne Lindberg**, and **Elizabeth Taft** for organizing this field trip, and many thanks to **Mike Roeder** for taking these photos for all of us to enjoy!

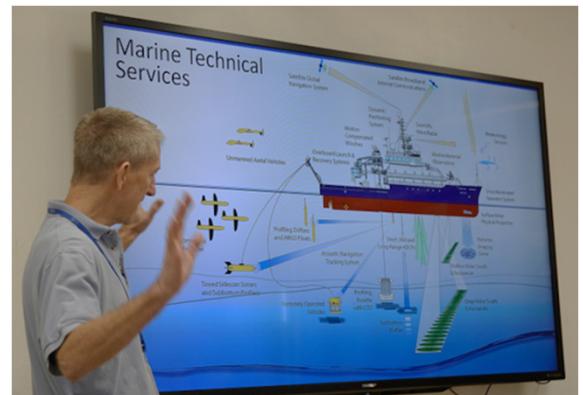
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## **Field Trip to Sally Ride Research Vessel (November 2, 2023)...** Continued from Page 4



R/V Sally Ride is operated by Scripps Institution of Oceanography under a charter agreement with the Office of Naval Research. Part of America's Academic Research Fleet, the Sally Ride is a shared-use research facility within the University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System (UNOLS), serving scientists and students from across the United States.



## **USD Check Presentation (October 24, 2023)**

On October 24th, University Relations Committee representatives visited USD's Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science to present the check to support new and continuing scholars. ARCS San Diego President **Kathe Albrecht**, University Relations Committee Chair **Catie Madani** and Nominating Committee member **Carolyn Sharp**

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## ***USD Check Presentation (October 24, 2023)***



visited the school to present a check to **Dean Jane Georges** and PhD Program Director **Cynthia Connelly**. Continuing scholars **Andrea Correia** and **Jennie Lee** joined new scholars **Tina Smith** and **Oliver Erece** to express their gratitude for the significant support provided by the ARCS Foundation. This group photo was taken to commemorate the occasion.

## ***Fall General Meeting (October 24, 2023)***

On a beautiful autumn morning, 44 ARCS Members and 13 new Scholars gathered at the La Jolla Country Club for our Fall General Meeting; a particular favorite for our members, because much of it is devoted to meeting our new Scholars.

Our President, **Kathe Albrecht**, presided over the meeting, which began with an introduction of our new members by **Laurie Roeder** (VP, Membership) followed by brief “elevator speeches” from all of our VP’s in which they described their roles and the make-up of their committees. Next, **Robin Luby** gave a pitch for the Member Giving Campaign



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## Fall General Meeting (October 24, 2023)...

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with the goal of 100% member participation. And finally, **Ingrid Benirschke-Perkins** (VP, Marketing & Communications), revealed our 2024 Scientist of the Year Honoree – **Dr. Terry Sejnowski** – and invited everyone to the 2024 SOY Celebration, which is set for April 27, 2024 (4-8 pm) at The Conrad Performing Arts Center in La Jolla.

Then the fun began when **Catie Madani** (VP, University Relations) invited the University Liaisons to step forward one-by-one and introduce the new Scholars from our four academic partners (SDSU, Scripps Research, UCSD, and USD). For the next 45 minutes we got to hear from each Scholar; a bit about their research and a bit about their personal lives. Their dedication to their research and their desire to give back to society at such a young age inspires us all!



We were then treated to a delicious lunch of macadamia-crusted chicken with rice and asparagus, followed by a traditional apple pie. Members and Scholars continued to mingle well after the conclusion of the meeting and we all went home feeling uplifted and proud to be an ARCS member!

Kudos and thanks to **Leslie Bruce, Sue Kalish, Alexis Lasheras, and Barbara Doren** for organizing such a memorable meeting!



## Scholar Picnic (October 15, 2023)

On a warm and sunny October afternoon, ARCS Scholars, members, and supporters gathered at the beautiful home of ARCS Member **Catie Madani** for the annual Scholar Picnic! There were approximately 20 ARCS Scholars present; some new, some returning, some partners of Scholars, and even the 3-week old child of **Brett Garabedian** (Scripps Research). Everyone enjoyed tacos from the traditional taco truck, along with many scrumptious side dishes, desserts and drinks. Thank you, Catie, for your incredible hospitality!!

**Rob Hanlon**, CPA, CFA at Corient (formerly Dowling & Yahnke, LLC) gave an interesting talk on building wealth and money management. The Scholars and members enjoyed his talk and the Scholars asked good, sophisticated questions.

ARCS Members in attendance included members of the University Relations Committee - **Catie Madani, Holly Heaton, Pam Werner, Kelly Hartshorn, Ann Hill, Cathie Atkins** - and ARCS donors **Ingrid Benirschke-Perkins** and **Robin Luby**.

Enjoy these photos provided by Holly and Ingrid!





## Scholar Picnic (October 15, 2023)...

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## Updates from ARCS Members

In early December, epidemiologist and ARCS member **Steffanie Strathdee** was featured in an episode of CNN's "Vital Signs," in which CNN Chief Medical Correspondent **Dr. Sanjay Gupta** spoke to several researchers exploring the use of phages, a naturally occurring virus that destroys bacteria, to see if they can be used as an alternative treatment method for antimicrobial resistant infections.

In this episode, Dr. Gupta joined Steffanie on a hunt for phages in some unlikely locations. She also shared her story about how she turned to phages when her husband fell ill after contracting a superbug infection while on a vacation in Egypt. To watch the complete episode on CNN's "Vital Signs," click [here](https://www.cnn.com/videos/health/2023/12/05/phages-antibiotic-resistance-research-vital-signs-intl-spc.cnn): <https://www.cnn.com/videos/health/2023/12/05/phages-antibiotic-resistance-research-vital-signs-intl-spc.cnn>



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## Updates from ARCS Members... Continued from Page 9



We were all deeply saddened to learn of the passing of a beloved former ARCS member **Bea Hadinger**, who served as co-president with **Joan Evangelou** from 2006-2008 and who was an ARCS Light honoree in 2010-2011.

**Mary Lou Quick** sent the following note to our VP of Membership, Laurie Roeder, when she learned of Bea's passing: "I have some wonderful memories of Bea, especially when she lived in Poway. We had meetings at her house. Also, one time she and Joan Evangelou sang a song they composed about ARCS. I think it is amazing that she remembers (or her family did) ARCS in her obituary," which you can read here:

<https://bringfuneralhome.com/tribute/details/324936/Beatrice-Hadinger/obituary.html>

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## Updates from ARCS Scholars & Scholar Alumni



ARCS Scholar alum **Melissa Ward, PhD (2018-2020 ARCS Scholar at SDSU)** co-authored an insightful OpEd in the *SD Union Tribune* in early December, pushing the Navy to support local climate action in San Diego. "This would also serve as a proof-of-concept for future collaborations on climate resilience between the military and the communities that host them, while serving the city's interests." Brava, Dr. Ward!!

Here's the link to the complete opinion piece:

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/opinion/commentary/story/2023-12-05/opinion-san-diego-navy-climate-change-solutions-collaborate-proactive>



ARCS Scholar alum **Liwen Deng, PhD (2017-2019 ARCS Scholar at SDSU)** shared some recent research about what can trigger an itch in itchy skin conditions such as eczema. Dr. Deng is currently working as a postdoc in Dr. Isaac Chiu's lab at Harvard Medical School. She and her colleagues published their findings in *Cell*, and then NPR picked up the story on *All Things Considered*, in this 3-minute segment: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2023/11/22/1214507233/what-can-trigger-an-itch-scientists-have-found-a-new-culprit>



## Updates from ARCS Scholars

### & Scholar Alumni... Continued from Page 10



**Consuelo Saucedo (2023-2024 ARCS Scholar at UCSD)** is a 4th year PhD student in the Gonzalez lab in the Dept of Pharmacology at UCSD, whose research focuses on understanding how diet can modulate the human gut microbiome and how this relates to diseases such as ulcerative colitis, a disease that affects the gastrointestinal tract. Consuelo was also the recipient of an Inclusive Excellence Award this past May. In this short video, narrated by some of her colleagues, you will learn about Consuelo's commitment to UCSD's principles of community and why she has earned the title of "Diversity Champion": [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=npe2qu\\_vTO8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=npe2qu_vTO8)



**Luis Cruz (2023-2024 ARCS Scholar at SDSU)** was honored to present his research at the recent National Diversity in STEM conference for SACNAS (Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science), which took place in Portland, Oregon (October 26-28). Luis spoke about his work on ovarian cancer and how the tumor microenvironment can cause relapse in patients. He and his research colleagues are trying to identify novel targets to inhibit cancer progression and prevent recurrent disease.



**Kevin Cavagnero (2022-2023 ARCS Scholar at UCSD)** found himself on the other side of the microphone recently when he was interviewed by Jesse Crowe, a science communicator from Melbourne, Australia, who explores the latest research and discoveries with renowned scientists from across the globe through his podcast called "Travelling Science." In this episode, Kellen discussed his research into the immune system and how it defends against pathogens and how it contributes to autoimmune and allergic disease. You can watch the full interview here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzjkN4SIYe8&t=817s>



**Kevin Kaufmann, PhD (2019-2021 ARCS Scholar at UCSD)**, a nanoengineering PhD alumnus from Prof. Kenneth Vecchio's lab at UC San Diego and co-author of a recent publication in *Science Advances*, reported that they had discovered a way to make ceramics tougher and more resistant to cracking. By building these materials using a blend of metal atoms possessing more electrons in their outer shell, they have unlocked the potential to enable ceramics to handle higher levels of force and stress than before. The challenge now lies in scaling up the production of these tough ceramics for commercial applications. That could help transform technologies that rely on high-performance ceramic materials, from aerospace components to biomedical implants. You can read the full story here: <https://today.ucsd.edu/story/electron-rich-metals-make-ceramics-tough-to-crack>



## Scholar Alumni - Where Are They Now?

**Christopher McKinney's, CPhil (2000-2002, UCSD)** career in public service started in 2002 with the City of San Diego's Wastewater Department. He worked there as an Electrical Engineer, Asset Management Coordinator, and Deputy Director of the Wastewater Treatment Division. He joined the City of Escondido team in 2011 as Utilities Director.



McKinney holds a Master of Engineering in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science from UCSD, and a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Science and Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He holds a Professional Engineer license from the State of California in Electrical Engineering since 2005. He also holds a Private Pilot certificate.

He and his wife, Teresa, have four children at home, ranging in age from 17 to 6. He enjoys traveling with his family and using his small telescope to feed his love of astronomy.

**Mark Tichenor, PhD (2006-2007, Scripps Research)** has spent his entire working career at The Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson; approaching seventeen years! As a Senior Principal Scientist at Janssen, Mark Tichenor's main responsibility is to identify new drug targets for immunology diseases; however, it takes more than a team of medicinal chemists to figure out the types of medicines that can best treat patients with these diseases.



Mark graduated from UC San Diego with a BS in Chemistry in 2002.

He went on to earn his PhD in Chemistry in the Boger lab at Scripps Research in 2007. His thesis focused on natural product total synthesis and medicinal chemistry. Mark works in the San Diego office of Johnson & Johnson and still resides in the area.

In this "What Chemists Do" interview, produced by the American Chemical Society, Mark shares his excitement about the opportunity to collaborate with other scientists and the importance of the alumni network for undergraduate students:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kaj5hfF3G\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kaj5hfF3G_Q)

**John Chalekian, MS (2001-2002, SDSU)** is a Co-Founder and Chief Analytics Officer at Jump Start Finance, an organization aiming to make high-quality child care more affordable for families and to help parents remain in the work force while keeping their children enrolled in high-quality care.



John has nearly 20 years of experience in the data science and predictive analytics fields serving the academic, consulting, clinical trial and financial services. Prior to launching Jump Start,

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## Scholar Alumni - Where Are They Now?...

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John worked at Encore Capital Group for nearly 15 years acting as the Vice President of Credit Risk and Research, where he managed a team of statisticians and data scientist and led new model development and predictive analytics that supported Encore's core business and international subsidiaries. John also acted as the company's primary asset/portfolio valuation executive for nearly a decade, and helped guide the profitable deployment of more than \$3.5 billion in both domestic and international markets. John served as business manager for the Consumer Credit Research Institute (CCRI), a center of excellence dedicated to measuring, understanding and predicting financially distressed consumer behavior.

Prior to joining Encore, John spent three years at UCSD serving as the lead statistician in an NSF and NIH funded research laboratory that focused on adolescent substance abuse and relapse behavior, where he provided statistical expertise for grant writing, graduate student research and peer reviewed publications. Before that, John spent two years teaching statistics as adjunct faculty at SDSU and, while there, was named Adjunct Teacher of the Year. In that era, John co-founded and ran a statistical consulting firm for three years that served clients across multiple industries spanning biotech to financial services.

John served as the Vice President of Academic Affairs for the San Diego Chapter of the American Statistical Association (appointed July 2013-2016). Throughout his working career, John has remained in the San Diego area and now resides in Encinitas with his family.

### ***ARCS Calendar of Events***

#### **JANUARY**

- Tuesday, January 16 – Board Meeting (via Zoom)
- Tuesday, January 30 – Member General Meeting  
(La Jolla Country Club)

#### **FEBRUARY**

- Tuesday, February 20 – Board Meeting (via Zoom)
- Thursday, February 22 – Field trip to Sharp Prebys Innovation & Education Center

#### **MARCH**

- Tuesday, March 19 – Board Meeting (via Zoom)
- Thursday, March 21 – Field trip to KPBS Studios at SDSU

#### **APRIL**

- Tuesday, April 16 – Board Meeting (via Zoom)
- Saturday, April 27 – Scientist of the Year Celebration  
(The Conrad Performing Arts Center)