

Lettre de la Présidente

Fall 2006

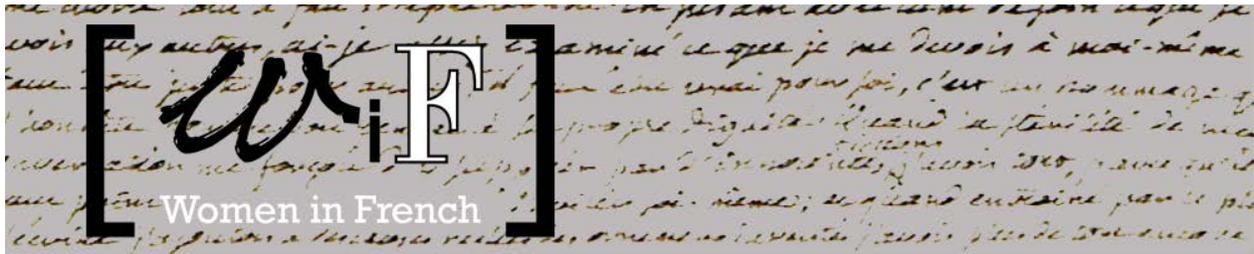
Dear Colleagues,

First, let me congratulate our Vice Chair Juliette Rogers and Nadine Bérenguer on the tremendous success of the third International WIF Conference held at the University of New Hampshire in Durham this past April. Kudos to Juliette, Nadine, and the other members of the program committee, Mary Anne Garnett, Nicole Meyer, and Sarah Gordon on a rich and varied program. Highlights included an opening keynote address by Professor Emerita Claire Quintal on women in Franco-American literature; a stellar performance of baroque music written by French women and played on vintage instruments by La Donna Musicale; a fascinating plenary session by Geraldine Sheridan on images of working women of eighteenth-century France; a moving reading and discussion by Québécoise writer Louise Dupré, and a lively closing program featuring Rhea Côté Robbins, Susan Poulin, and Josée Vachon. The conference focus on women and work—Juliette's own area of expertise—evoked wonderful resonances across periods and genres. On a personal note: as someone living and teaching in a French-speaking city in Maine, I found the attention paid French women of Acadia, Québec, and New England especially gratifying. Juliette and Nadine are already working on the publication of selected essays from the conference in a special volume of *WIF Studies*.

The special volume *French/Francophone Culture and Literature through Film*, edited by Catherine R. Montfort and Michèle Bissière, has received much well deserved praise. This is a 2005 issue, but members who joined in 2006 may order it as a back issue using copies the order forms on the last pages of *Women In French Studies*.

More congratulations go to our valiant secretary, Elizabeth Locey, on her miracle baby, Anne Charlotte, born 32 weeks prematurely, but now flourishing at home with her mother and father. Elizabeth is already back to work on registrations and renewals, reporting that we are more than 420 members strong. Elizabeth is a prime example of the dedication WIF volunteers bring to our organization. We depend entirely on the efforts of people who give freely of their time and of themselves to ensure that WIF remains a strong vehicle for the dissemination of scholarship on French and francophone women's writing. WIF members' expressions of understanding, patience, and community in these extraordinary circumstances were truly appreciated.

We have a number of volunteers who have, after years of service, passed the baton on to new members. We should salute Christine Lac as she steps down from her position as treasurer after more than five years. Eileen Ketchum, of Muhlenberg College, has come forward to take on the treasurer's responsibilities. Adrianna Paliyenko has relinquished her role as manager of library circulation, which will now be handled by Maureen Perry of the University of Southern Maine_s Lewiston-Auburn College. Last but not least, Miléna Santoro, our superb book review



editor for WIF Studies, will pass her duties to Sara Steinert Borella, who has served WIF so well in so many capacities.

Eileen's appointment as treasurer, ratified by the Executive Committee, has raised an important issue. According to the organization's by laws the secretary and treasurer are elected for a term of two years. However, this has not been the practice. The individuals who fill these key positions in fact volunteer to serve as the need arises and, because of the complexity of their responsibilities, remain for far longer than two years. We are therefore proposing a Change to the By Laws to reflect that reality. Please VOTE on the enclosed ballot or by e-mail on this change.

We also need votes from members from the South and the Pacific for representatives from those regions. You'll find information and statements from those candidates on page [?] of this Newsletter as well as a paper ballot (enclosed). Or, if you prefer, you can vote by e-mail.

Finally I ask you each to vote for your two choices for topics for the 2007 MLA Convention sessions.

As we look forward to the future, please mark your calendars for the Fourth International WIF Conference to be held at the University of North Texas April 10-13, 2008. We're grateful to WIF *fidèles* Marie-Christine Koop, Marijn Kaplan, and Jerry Nash for proposing their home institution for our next conference. It seems fitting that our fourth conference should be held in the south: our WIF conferences will have covered all four points of the compass.

Another generous *fidèle*, who wishes to remain anonymous, has donated funds to support the WIF Undergraduate Prize and further honor our finest undergraduate students and their teachers. The winners will receive an award of \$50, while their WIF mentors will receive plaques like those now given to graduate advisors of the winner of the Graduate Prize. As you know, this year Isabelle Coitoux has won in the native-speaker category for her essay, « L'effet du vrai et la quête identitaire dans *Enfance* de Nathalie Sarraute », submitted to Marlène Barsoum, Hunter College

City University of New York. Leslie Kealhofer is awarded the non-native speaker prize for : « 'Le jour n'a d'égal que la nuit' : Immobilité, culpabilité et le rôle de la lumière dans *Kamouraska* d'Anne Hébert », written for Catherine Perry, University of Notre Dame.

Congratulations to both. Their essays will appear on the WIF website.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the WIF sessions organized by Anne-Marie Obajtek-Kirkwood and Annik Doquire Kerszberg (see p. _) and at our annual Business Meeting at the MLA Convention in Philadelphia this December 28. Details to be announced.

Marie Rice-Defosse