

Lettre de la Présidente

Fall 2010

Dear WIF Colleagues,

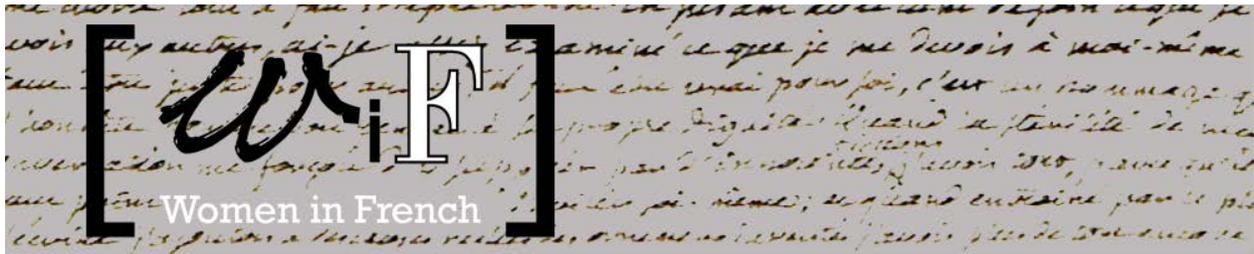
I hope that you have enjoyed a relaxing and productive summer and that the new academic year is bringing with it new challenges and discoveries. As you all know, a dark shadow has loomed over French studies this year, with French majors eliminated at several institutions including Southeastern Louisiana University and Otterbein College, along with the threat of elimination at places like University of Maine and SUNY-Albany. I appreciate very much all of the letter writing and mutual support that WIF members have given to our colleagues at SUNY-Albany this fall, and I sincerely hope that your efforts will have meaningful impact on the administration there.

As I am sure many of you know, Women in French has had a very busy spring and summer, with the latest WIF conference held last June, the very first WIF sessions held at NEMLA in Montreal in April, new volumes of WIF Studies in print and under preparation, and our new website up and running: www.womeninfrench.org/.

First, I want to offer many thanks to Judith Miller, Natalie Edwards, Martine Guyot-Bender, and the entire program committee for their contributions to the 5th Women in French conference, held at Wagner College on Staten Island in New York. The meeting was a great success in so many ways: I enjoyed the intense but friendly discussion and debate that I heard frequently, not only in individual sessions, but in the hallways and over meals and even in a karaoke bar! It was wonderful to meet new members and to reconnect with colleagues who have been coming to WIF conferences for a decade now. And the setting was spectacular – from the gorgeous plantings to the fabulous view of Manhattan from the campus center. I am especially grateful for the financial support of the Provost's office at Wagner College, and for the fine welcome that she gave us during the opening reception. I was also impressed with the support and involvement of Natalie's colleagues at Wagner, from departments all across campus. Thanks to all for a wonderful event in Women in French history.

Natalie Edwards, Amy Hubbell, and Chris Hogarth are currently working on the special volume of Women in French Studies that will be devoted to a selection of essays revised from papers given at the conference. Thank you to everyone who submitted manuscripts for consideration in that special volume.

I also appreciate the initiative of Natalie Edwards, who finally changed NEMLA's longstanding policy to refuse "sponsored" sessions. As you may know, other regional MLAs (MMLA, SAMLMA, PAMLA) have had WIF-sponsored panels and active WIF participation for many years. Because of Natalie's efforts, and Colette Trout's organization, the very first WIF-sponsored session took place at NEMLA's annual meeting in Montreal in April. In addition to



Colette's panel, "Rebelles, mécréantes, criminelles," there were several other panels with WIF members who presented their latest research. Some of us have been looking forward to this change in NEMLA's policy for many years, and it was a true pleasure to know that so many of our members participated in this new venue for WIF scholarship.

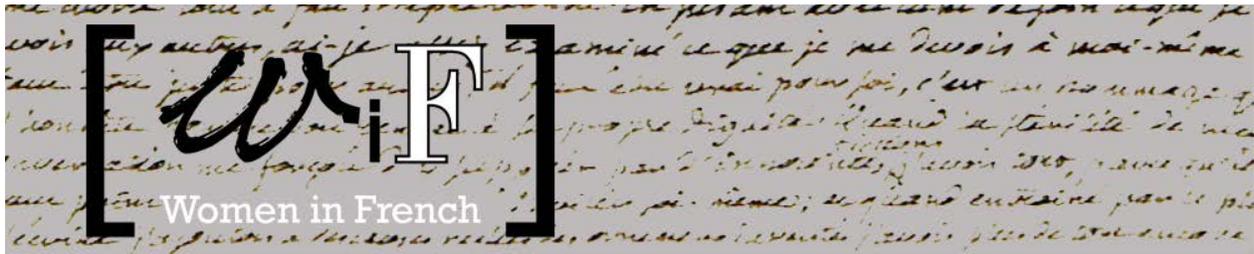
For the NEMLA 2011 convention, to be held next April in New Brunswick, New Jersey, we have two official WIF-sponsored sessions and several more "unofficial" sessions that have been organized by our WIF members - bravo! For more information on upcoming regional conferences with WIF participation, please refer to the Conferences section of this newsletter.

This year's MLA convention will also provide some welcome changes – it will be held during a new time – January 6 to 9, 2011 - and the program committee has tried to find ways to promote more collaboration between different divisions and organizations that participate in the convention. For example, Women in French will still have one guaranteed session each year, but we also have the opportunity to participate in collaborative sessions with another division or organization. This year, the WIF session, "Women Filming the Real," organized by Martine Guyot-Bender, will take place Friday, January 7 from 8:30 to 9:45 a.m. in Room 306A in the LA Convention Center. Speakers include Leslie Kealhofer, Florida State Univ., Julie Monty, Univ. of Central Arkansas, Karen S. Kingsbury, Presbyterian Coll. and Catherine S. Webster, Univ. of Central Oklahoma. The second session, a collaborative session with the Francophone Division titled "L'héroïsme au féminin dans la littérature contemporaine francophone" was organized by Katherine Kolb, and will occur on Thursday, January 6 from 1:45 to 3:00 p.m. in Room 403A in the LA Convention Center. That session will include presentations by Edwige Tamalet Talbayev, Yale University, Nicole Boudreau, University of Maine-Fort Kent and Alison Rice, University of Notre Dame, with a response from Catherine Perry, University of Notre Dame.

You are all invited to attend the Women in French Annual Business Meeting, to be held on Thursday January 6 from 8:45 to 10:00 p.m. in Room 301B of the LA Convention Center. We will be offering desserts and coffee to all who attend, so please feel free to bring colleagues who may be interested in learning more about our activities and joining WIF.

The 2012 MLA is scheduled for January 5-8 in Seattle, Washington. After a successful call for proposals earlier this month, we are now accepting your votes for the next WIF session at the MLA and the next collaborative WIF session with another organization at the MLA. For details on the different sessions being proposed, please refer to the MLA 2012 section of this newsletter. Then send your votes to the nominating committee, Annabelle Rea and Colette Trout: rea@oxy.edu, ctrout@ursinus.edu, by December 1. The winning proposals will be announced at the annual WIF business meeting during the MLA convention on January 6.

This time of year brings with it our annual WIF elections. We have openings for three regional representatives, and are seeking your votes IF you teach or reside in one of the following

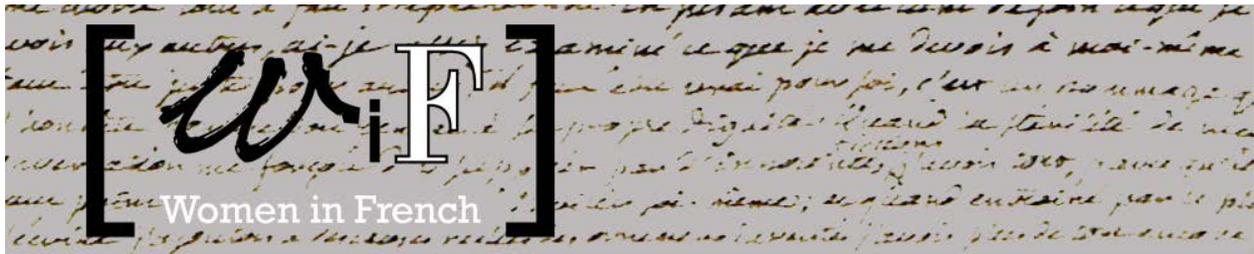


regions: 1. Central and Rocky Mountains (one candidate): Arline Cravens, Visiting Instructor of French at Saint Louis University. 2. Great Lakes (two candidates): Ruth A. Hottell, University of Toledo, and E. Nicole Meyer, University of Wisconsin–Green Bay. 3. Mid-Atlantic (one candidate) : Florence Ramond Jurney, Gettysburg College (PA). To read the candidates’ statements, please check the Elections section in this newsletter (p. 16). Votes must be sent by paper mail or email to the nominating committee: Annabelle Rea and Colette Trout by December 1. Results will be announced at the MLA in Los Angeles in January. I am very pleased to confirm the complete overhaul of our website by our web manager, Nancy Virtue. If you missed the original announcement made in September, the new website address is: www.womeninfrench.org. Please check it out, and if you have any news or announcements that you would like to add, please do go ahead and contact Nancy this fall.

We are seeking a new website manager to take Nancy Virtue’s place, since she will be stepping down from her position by the end of the year at the latest. The website was just renovated, therefore the position of web manager will mainly be one of maintenance –adding announcements and making changes as needed when members contact you. If you would like to be involved, or know of a good candidate for the position, please contact me immediately (jmrogers@macalester.edu).

One of the long-term projects that the Executive Committee discussed during our meeting in New York last June was the possibility of adding all of the past bibliographies that originally appeared in our newsletters to the new womeninfrench.org website. This would allow for easier access to this valuable information for all our members, since not everyone joined WIF 20 years ago (and even those of us who are long-time members may have misplaced those old paper copies)! However, as you can imagine, this project will be a major undertaking, and one that will probably require several volunteers (or someone who could donate work-study help for the project). Not only do we need someone to contact each author to receive her or his approval to publish the bibliographies online, we will also need to find someone who could convert some of the older bibliographies to digital format that is compatible with the current website. If you would like to be a part of this process, please write me a note, preferably before December 1, so that we can work on getting together a group and assigning tasks before the new year.

Another topic for discussion during our meeting in June was the undergraduate prize for best essay. Our devoted prize committee, Margot Miller and Cora Monroe, took all of the comments and suggestions made by Executive Committee members and have revised the guidelines so that they are more detailed and clearer for undergraduates who wish to submit an essay for the competition in the future. Some of the basic requirements include: 10-12 page paper (not shorter lengths nor full-length senior theses), MLA format, written in French (it should be noted if the writer is not a native-speaker), literary topic (or a cultural topic is acceptable, as long as there is the same kind of sustained analysis and references to critical works on the topic). Deadlines are twice a year, in December and May. For a full copy of the revised guidelines,



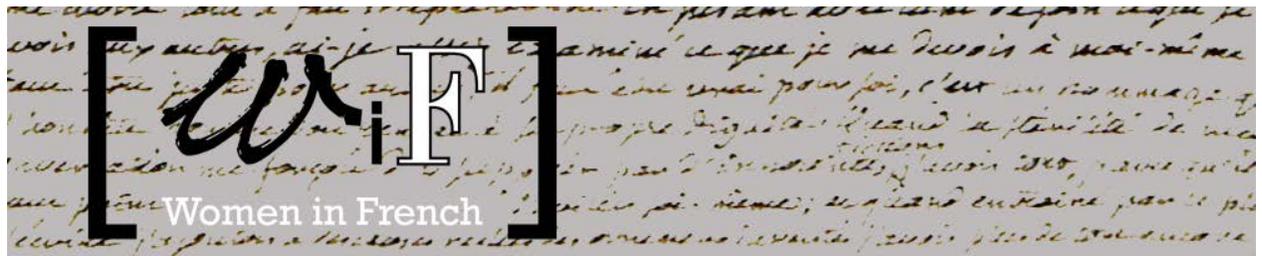
please see pp. 12-13 or check the website page: <http://www.womeninfrench.org/infos/prix-du-meilleur-essai/>

I want to remind all members that the WIF Graduate Essay competition is also underway for 2011; graduate students who wish to submit an essay should contact Katherine Stephenson at: ksstephe@uncc.edu

During our discussions in June, we also consulted with Dawn Cornelio, the Executive Editor for our journal, *Women in French Studies*, about the various options for moving to an online journal. As she explained, this kind of move would, of course, open up the journal and our members' scholarship to many more viewers – anyone who has access to the worldwide web. However, the committee felt that we need to understand the costs and the possible limitations associated with a purely online journal, or the possibility of combining a paper journal for members with an online journal for libraries and other non-members. These discussions will continue, and we welcome the suggestions and comments of all members on this topic.

A final topic of discussion during the Executive Committee meeting was the location for our next WIF conference, probably for Spring 2012 or 2013. Because only one of our five WIF conferences has taken place on the west coast, we would like to offer a conference in the west. At the present time, we are working on an offer for a conference in Arizona for April or May 2012, however we have not confirmed the plans yet. If there is a member who lives in the western U.S. or Canada who would consider hosting a WIF conference, please contact me immediately: jmrogers@macalester.edu.

As you can see from this very long letter, our members have, as usual, been incredibly dedicated to keep the WIF organization running and visible. I want to thank the following officers for their great efforts, all volunteer, of course, on behalf of WIF: Cheryl Morgan, who organized and prepared the entire newsletter that you are currently reading, Marijn Kaplan, who keeps all of the membership data accurate and up-to-date, Eileen McEwan, who managed our budget wisely through the conference and the journal mailings this spring, and to Dawn for her heroic first year as editor of WIF Studies. Special thanks also go to Gay Rawson, who has kept both of our email lists running (the main list and the pedagogy list) without a problem for years. And I want to especially express my gratitude to Martine Guyot-Bender, co-editor of the newsletter with Cheryl Morgan for many years, and one of the key members of the program committee for the 2010 conference – it was her initial emails and follow-up reminders to the list that allowed many members to submit a proposal or session and to spread the word to colleagues about our scholarly meeting. I hope you enjoyed your sabbatical leave, Martine! I am also sincerely grateful to the major renovations that Nancy Virtue made to our website; it is our “public” image and had been in need of a makeover for some time. Thank you, Nancy, and I hope we find a new web manager soon so that you can take some well-deserved time off from your work for WIF.



These are only some of the many volunteers who work together to make this organization the dynamic intellectual and professional group it is today. Merci à toutes, et bonne rentrée.

Juliette Rogers