

Lettre de la présidente

Fall 2014

Dear Colleagues,

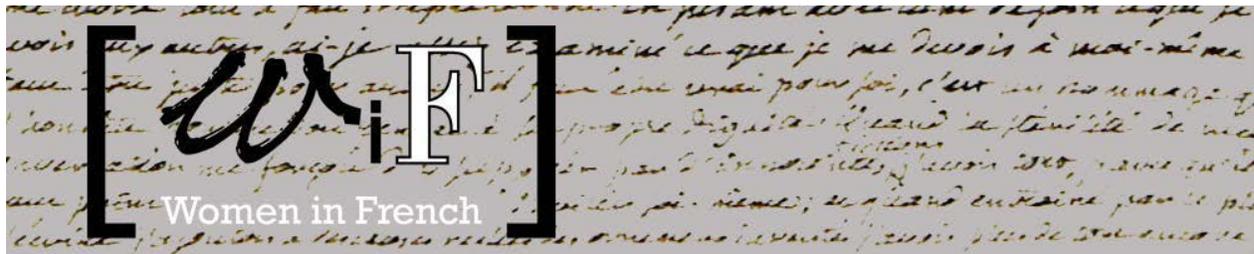
As autumn casts its glow, I find myself still basking in the warm camaraderie and intellectual stimulation of our spring conference at Guelph. The quality of the papers, the excellence of the guest speakers, the friendly atmosphere, and the presence of so many participants from Canadian universities made this conference a truly memorable experience for all involved. My deepest thanks go to the organizers, Dawn Cornelio, Margot Irvine and Karin Schwerdtner, and to all to those who made this conference so successful.

Since my letter in Spring 2014, we have had some changes in leadership positions within WIF. Having served as our Secretary for five years, Marijn Kaplin stepped down and has been replaced by Theresa Kennedy. I offer my heartfelt thanks to Marijn for her hard work and my congratulations to Theresa on her election by the WIF Executive Committee. Also, after many years of dedicated service to *WIF Studies*, Dawn Cornelio and Valérie Dusillant-Fernandes decided it was time to leave their respective positions as Executive Editor and Production Editor. I'm sure that you all join me in thanking them for the superb job that they have done with the journal. The *WIF Studies* Board has elected Juliette Rogers as the new Executive Editor and Marijn Kaplan as Production Editor. I look forward to working with them in their new positions.

In December we will hold elections for representatives from three regions as well as Graduate Student Representative.

Electronic voting will take place from December 1 to December 31, 2014. Members will receive an email reminder to vote both from the WIF listserv and by a message and link generated by the website [VotingPlace.net](http://VotingPlace.net). The email address that you have provided on your membership form will be used to identify you as a registered voter. I wish to thank our Nominating Committee, Annabelle Rea and Colette Trout, as well as all those who have volunteered to run for these offices. I would also like to encourage our members to volunteer for the various positions within WIF as opportunities present themselves. The role of the Nominating Committee is to coordinate the selection process; they only actively seek nominees in the absence of volunteers. All positions are open to anyone and our elections are held by secret ballot using [VotingPlace.net](http://VotingPlace.net) to ensure fairness.

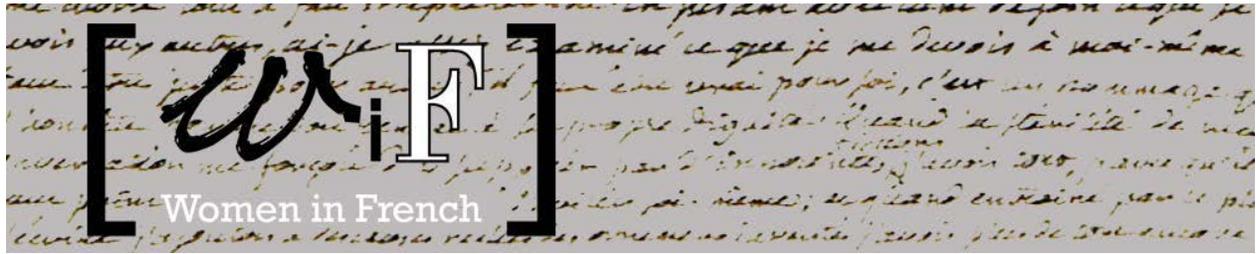
As part of our December elections, we will also be voting on a topic for our guaranteed session at the MLA in Austin in 2016. Please submit your proposal (200-250 words) to me ([magarnett@ualr.edu](mailto:magarnett@ualr.edu)) by **Saturday November 15, 2014**. Normally, the person who proposes the session also chairs the session. Once the topic is chosen, all members have the opportunity to submit abstracts to the session organizer who makes the selection.



At our Executive Committee meeting in Guelph, we also approved a number of changes to the bylaws to be submitted for vote at the annual MLA conference in January 2015. The principal changes include four additions to the Executive Committee (WIF Studies Editor, Newsletter Editor, Website Manager, and Listserv Manager) and descriptions of the duties of secretary and treasurer that better conform to how their responsibilities have evolved over the past years. The bylaws provide for the submission of absentee ballots; they will therefore be included as part of the December online vote. The complete bylaws, suggested revisions and rationale for the revisions are included later in this newsletter.

The initiative undertaken in fall 2013 to provide mock online job interviews for graduate students (also junior faculty seeking new employment) was very successful. Nine individuals took advantage of this opportunity last year and thirteen members volunteered to serve as mentors/interviewers. We shall be offering this service again in November; please consider volunteering your expertise as a mentor/interviewer.

I hope to see many of you at the MLA convention in Vancouver in January 2015. Our guaranteed session, “Female-Authored Life Writing and Scandal,” is scheduled for 1:45-3:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 12. We were disappointed that the MLA Program Committee did not accept our joint session proposal with the Nineteenth-Century French Literature division. However, Michèle Schaal, our web manager, will be representing WIF at a roundtable organized by the Women’s Caucus for Modern Languages, “Negotiating Past and Future: Feminist Activism in Language and Literature Workplaces.” The WCML session will be held from 3:30-4:45 on Saturday, January 12, that is, directly following our WIF session. The roundtable includes leaders from the Women’s Caucus for the Modern Languages, the Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession, Feministas Unidas, Women in French, and Women in German. Topics include the need for feminist activism, feminization of the profession, contingent labor, and gendered labor in higher education. As was the case last year, WIF will be a co-sponsor of the cash bar organized by the Women’s Caucus; as of now the time and place have not yet been announced. We will, of course, be holding our annual business meeting at MLA. It will also take place on January 12. We do not as yet have a definite time or location but I will inform all members via the listserv as soon as these can be determined. Those attending the business meeting will be asked to approve revisions to the by-laws that were proposed at our Executive Committee meeting in Guelph and that are printed in this newsletter. These include revisions that will better define the duties of secretary now that membership renewal and the directory are done electronically. Most importantly, we propose that four new positions be added to the WIF Executive Board, namely those of *WIF Studies* and *WIF Newsletter* editors, as well as our website and listserv managers. Those who hold these important – and time-consuming – positions are included in Executive Committee discussions but have not had voting rights.



Finally, I wish to congratulate our regional representatives on the fine job they are doing to ensure a strong WIF participation in the regional MLAs. For the first time, WIF has also had a session, “La femme, la fuite,” accepted for the Nineteenth-Century French Studies Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico. If anyone is interested in proposing a WIF session for other conferences, please contact me. This is an excellent way of increasing our visibility and attracting new members.

My best wishes to all for a productive academic year.

Mary Anne Garnett  
University of Arkansas at Little Rock