

Lettre de la Présidente

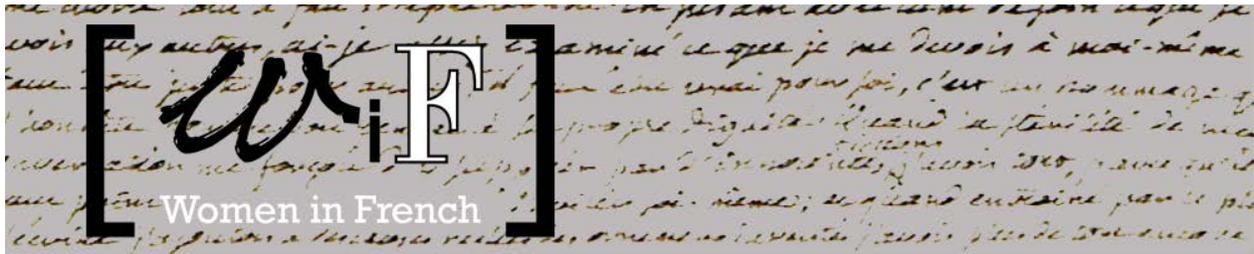
Spring 2004

As I assume my new responsibilities as Chair of Women in French, I feel truly honored to have been elected. It would be daunting to follow dynamic leaders like Annabelle Rea, Colette Trout, and Catherine Montfort, if I hadn't already benefited from their sage advice; I know I can count on their continued support. I am especially indebted to our outgoing Chair, Catherine Montfort. Thanks to her, Women in French continues to be a strong, vibrant professional organization. She has left an impressive legacy, including a fine team in vital leadership positions and superb finances. Her own institution, the University of Santa Clara, has been exceptionally generous to WIF. I am certain that Catherine will continue to be a moving force in WIF, not only as a member of the executive committee but as president of PAMLA, where WIF is so well represented in panels and publications, in no small part thanks to Catherine. My own hope is to continue to build on the momentum created by my predecessors. I pledge to dedicate myself to the task.

Our business meeting, held during the 2003 MLA convention at the Harbor House, in San Diego's Seaport Village, was an occasion to reconnect with old friends and meet new ones. Special thanks go to Nicole Aas-Rouxparis, who graciously agreed to handle the menu arrangements. The minutes of the meeting acknowledge how important volunteers are to our organization. As Catherine did at the meeting, I would like to recognize a number of them. First, I would like to thank all the nominees who agreed to run for office in our elections or propose topics for the 2004 MLA in Philadelphia. Such commitment is essential to the continued success of our organization. The results in the election of officers and in the choice of MLA topics were extraordinarily close, according to Lucy Schwartz, Chair of the Nominating Committee. Lucy herself deserves praise for her important part in the election process.

Congratulations to the newly elected members of the Executive Committee: Juliette Rogers (Vice Chair), Jeanne Garane (representative for the South), and Sara Steinert Borella (representative for the Western United States and Western Canada). In the coming year, the Executive Committee will review the bylaws, examining its own composition and perhaps proposing to the membership certain changes, such as the inclusion of a graduate student representative on the committee.

I'd also like to congratulate the winners of our Undergraduate Prizes and their advisors, announced at the Business Meeting by Lucy Schwartz and Margot Miller (in absentia). Ainsley Brown, a student of Barbara Havercroft of the University of Toronto, wrote "Le va-et-vient de l'écriture dans la construction du sujet féminin pluriel dans *Passion simple* d'Annie Ernaux." Jessica Dillon, of Gettysburg College where she was the student of Florence Raymond Journey, wrote "L'exil : Gisèle comme un lien entre générations." I also had the pleasure of meeting the winner of last year's Graduate Prize, Alison Rice, when she attended the Business Meeting of the



Women's Caucus for the Modern Languages where she was announced the winner of the Florence Howe Award for outstanding feminist scholarship by a WCML member.

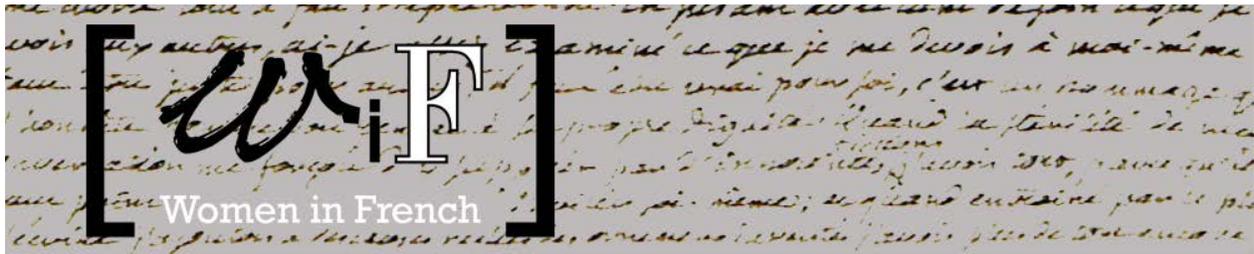
The WIF sessions at the MLA Convention, "Espaces féminins en mouvance," organized by Florence Ramond Jurney, and "In a Mirror Darkly: France Looks Back on the Nazi Occupation," organized by Judith Holland Sarnecki, were successful and well attended. [Unfortunately, Judy was unable to attend due to an injury sustained in an accident and Eileen Hoft-March ably took her place as chair. We wish Judy a speedy recovery.] The WIF sessions were included in a pamphlet listing sessions featuring topics on women and gender, such as those of the Women's Caucus for the Modern Languages, Women in German, and Feministas Unidas. With WIF member Roseanna Dufault as the new WCML President, we can hope for even greater coordination and cooperation.

Although it is impossible to acknowledge everyone who contributes to WIF, some members deserve special thanks at this moment. Nancy Virtue, who stepped in for Valérie Lastinger, now maintains our website (<http://www.ipfw.edu/ilcs/WIF>). Valérie, too, deserves our appreciation for all she contributed during her years of service as site manager; her design remains visible on the new site. Roseanna Dufault and Karen Woodward have worked with Nancy to update the WIF online Directory on a regular basis. Christine Lac continues in her key role as treasurer. Sara Steinert Borella, recently elected the delegate for the Western United States and Western Canada, continues to manage our listserves.

Particular thanks go to Myrna Rochester, who has served as the association's secretary since 2000. Her superbly maintained membership records have greatly facilitated communication with individual members. Myrna has not only assured ease of access to the WIF membership files, she has been a source of good sense and good will for all of us who have worked with her. Thankfully, Myrna has agreed to "train" her successor, Elizabeth Locey, in the intricacies of the position. Elizabeth, as you may know, is already the representative for the Central and Rocky Mountain region.

Frédérique Chevillot continues as the able editor of our journal, WIF Studies. She has announced publication of Selected Essays from the WIF 2000 Conference in January 2004, to be followed shortly by volume 11 of the Studies. Miléna Santoro serves as book review editor and Adrianna Paliyenko as managing editor. WIF Studies has attained a place as a key vehicle for the dissemination of the scholarly work on women writing in French. We are fortunate to have a dedicated editorial board and an advisory board of renowned feminist scholars.

The upcoming WIF conference at Scripps College, April 22-24 2004 promises to be a wonderful event that will further showcase the scholarship of WIF members. As on-site conference coordinators, Thierry Boucquey and Nathalie Rachlin have made the local arrangements and have posted information on the WIF website regarding the host institution,



registration, hotels, transportation, etc. (<http://www.ipfw.edu/ilcs/WIF>). We owe them our gratitude for enormous efforts in such a short period of time.

It was my pleasure to serve on the Program Committee with chair Annabelle Rea and Cathy Yandell. They each brought to the task a wealth of experience and a generosity of spirit that made our communications by e-mail easy and efficient. Annabelle's leadership and prompt attention to detail allowed the committee to complete its work in record time. I'm excited about a program that features fresh scholarship on a wide range of women writers and issues. The program, which appears on the WIF website, includes two dance presentations and workshops, one on North African dance and one on Haitian dance, in celebration of the anniversary of the Haitian independence. We also will enjoy two plenary speakers. Our keynote speaker, Marie-Denise Shelton of Claremont-McKenna College, will present, "Ecriture de l'histoire," also related to the Haitian theme. Thanks to arrangements made by Bénédicte Maugière, Marie-Claire Blais, Canada's greatest living French-speaking writer, will read from her works at the closing banquet.

WIF enjoys excellent financial health, due in large part to our outgoing Chair's fundraising efforts and financial management (see Treasurer's Report). WIF is therefore able to offer some modest support to members who must travel a significant distance or who otherwise are in great need of supplemental funding.

I am certain the 2004 WIF conference will be a memorable occasion. Whether they are presenting or not, I encourage all WIF members to attend, "Venez nombreux et nombreuses!"

*Marie Rice-Defosse*