

Lettre de la Présidente

Spring 2008

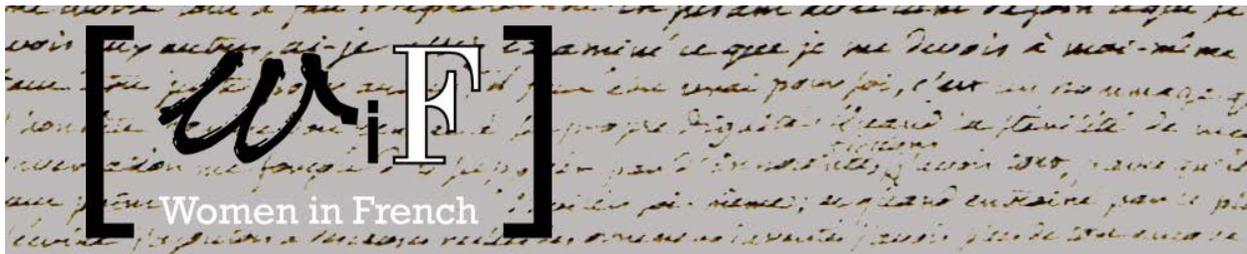
It is a great pleasure and honor to become the new President of Women in French and I humbly pledge to serve the members of this organization to the best of my abilities. Thanks to the amazing efforts and support of my predecessors, Women in French enjoys a strong reputation and is continuing to expand both in North America and around the world. I am truly grateful in particular for the tireless Mary Rice-Defosse, our outgoing President, who has been an incredible role model over the past four years both in her leadership style and her impressive understanding of our organization and its members. Her wisdom and great sense of humor have saved me on numerous occasions and I am especially indebted to her, both for her rapid replies to my email questions and for her continual dedication and hard work for Women in French.

During Mary's term as President, Women in French held its second and third conferences (in 2004 and 2006) and the planning is well underway for the fourth WIF conference in April 2008. Mary has also overseen the smooth transition of every single position on the Executive Board: since 2004 she has helped to find and support volunteers to take on the roles of Secretary, Treasurer, Journal Editors (Executive, Production, and Book Review Editors), Newsletter Editors, Directory Editor, Nominating Committee Chairs, List Serve Manager, Library Circulation Managers, and new Graduate Student representatives. Indeed, it was Mary who brought the proposal for a Graduate Student rep. to our Executive board and the first elections for a graduate student occurred in 2006, under her leadership. Mary's ability to encourage and mentor all of these new board members has been truly remarkable, and my own hope is to continue to build on the momentum created by her presidency.

Of course, it should also be noted that Mary's work for Women in French did not begin four years ago when she was elected Présidente: I therefore want to recognize and give thanks to the many other positions that she has filled for WIF: her years as Vice-Présidente, Directory Editor, Conference Committee Member, and Special Volume Editor (and I'm sure I'm forgetting some other responsibilities!). Her efforts for this organization over the years have been astounding – merci infiniment Mary!

Our annual Assemblée Générale, held this year during the 2007 MLA convention at the Palm Restaurant in the Sofitel Chicago, offered us a chance to visit with old friends and meet new ones, and I was impressed with the turnout, given that we were meeting during an authentic Chicago snowstorm! I would like to thank Bates College very much for their generous support of that meeting, given in honor of Mary's many years of service to Women in French.

The minutes of the business meeting acknowledge how important volunteers are to our organization. As Mary 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 to propose topics for the 2008 MLA in San Francisco. Such commitment is essential to the continued



success of our organization. Many thanks go to Annabelle Rea and Colette Trout, Co-Chairs of the Nominating Committee, for their important roles in the election process.

And I would like to offer my congratulations to the newly elected members of the Executive Committee: Cathy Yandell (Vice President), Florence Ramond Journey (representative for the Mid-Atlantic region), Ruth Hotell (representative for the Great Lakes region), Frédérique Chevillot (representative for the Central/Rocky Mountain region), and our new graduate student representative, Arline Cravens. It was a pleasure to meet Arline at the business meeting and to see her hard at work recruiting other grad students at MLA (Mary saw her at the second Sand session!). The membership also voted in these elections to change the officer titles from Chair to President and from Vice-Chair to Vice-President, to be in line with other allied organizations and to be closer to the French terms *Présidente* and *Vice-Présidente*.

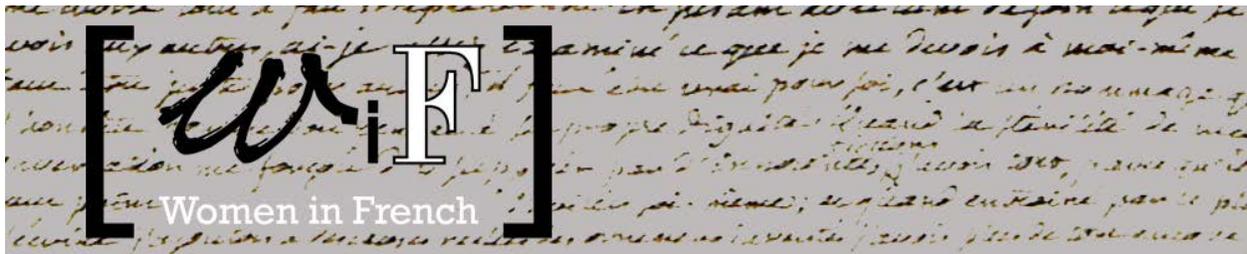
We had a number of excellent proposals for the WIF Sessions at the 2008 MLA in San Francisco next December. Congratulations to the winners “Le Roman noir au féminin” organized by Monique Manopoulos, Idaho State University, and “Francophone Women Directors” organized by Sylvie Blum, University of Florida. Deadlines for proposals (sent directly to them) is March 15, 2008.

The WIF sessions at the 2007 MLA Convention, “Miscreants and Deviants of French Literature and Cinema” organized by Judith Holland Sarnecki, and “Le moi en crise: Autobiography and Confession in Women’s Writing,” organized by Gay Rawson, were successful and well attended: 23 in the audience on Thursday and 47 on Friday. [Unfortunately, Gay was unable to attend due to both illness and the bad weather; many thanks to Elizabeth Locey who ably took her place as chair.]

Although it is impossible to acknowledge everyone who contributes to WIF, some members deserve special thanks at this moment. First, thanks go to Nancy Virtue, who maintains our website (<http://users.ipfw.edu/virtue/WIF/default.htm>), and to Gay Rawson, who manages both of our listserves, all with great efficiency and tact.

I also thank Roseanna Dufault and our newest volunteer, Antoinette Sol, for their work to update the WIF online Directory on a regular basis.

Eileen (Ketchum) McEwan has taken over the key role of Treasurer and her work with our website manager Nancy Virtue and our Secretary Elizabeth Locey has made the PayPal option a reality: you may now pay for annual membership dues online, via PayPal, on the Women in French website. If you still prefer to mail in a check, you may do so if you have a bank account in U.S. dollars.



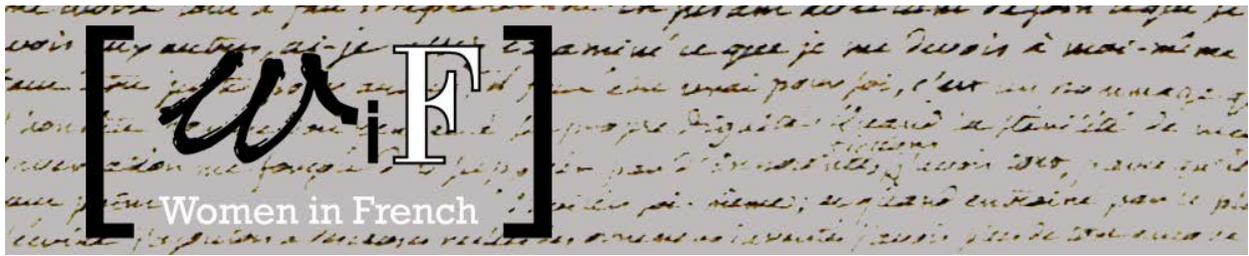
Special thanks also go to Elizabeth Locey, who has served as the association's secretary since 2004. Her superbly maintained membership records have greatly facilitated communication with individual members. It can be an overwhelming job juggling 350 to 400 membership records – especially when she receives 100 emails in a 2-day period during end-of-the-semester finals! Her meticulous recordkeeping have ensured that members are kept informed and up-to-date, and we appreciate your patience which allows her to do a thorough and accurate job.

Catherine Montfort continues as the assiduous executive editor for our journal, *WIF Studies*. We are very proud that the CELJ (Council of Editors of learned Journals) named *WIF Studies* as one of two “Featured Journals of the Month” in December 2007 and January 2008 (located on the home page of their website: <http://www.celj.org/index.php>). Catherine has announced that the regular 2007 volume of *WIF Studies* was at the printers in December and should have arrived in the mail by the time you receive this newsletter. The Selected Essays from the WIF 2006 Conference will be available very soon, in spring 2008. The journal is also accepting submissions for the regular 2008 volume and for the Special Issue on women’s rivalry and cooperation, with guest editors Julia Simms Holderness and Laurence M. Porter. The special issue is scheduled to appear in 2010.

Sara Steinert Borella as book review editor, Dawn Cornello as production editor, and Maureen Perry as library circulation manager, all deserve our gratitude for their unflagging efforts to expand and disseminate our noted scholarly publication. We are fortunate to have a dedicated editorial board and an advisory board of renowned feminist scholars.

The upcoming WIF conference in Dallas, TX, April 10-13, 2008 promises to be a wonderful event that will further showcase the scholarship of WIF members. The conference coordinators, Marijn Kaplan and Marie-Christine Koop, are busy putting together a very promising program, with keynote by 17th-century specialist Perry Gethner, a closing banquet and concert, and local tours of the Dallas Women’s Museum. The website will be updated very soon with key information on local arrangements, including registration form, hotel reservations, and transportation options. We owe these colleagues our gratitude for the enormous efforts that are required to organize a conference program and oversee the local arrangements as well.

WIF enjoys a solid financial condition, due in large part to our outgoing Chair's fundraising efforts and financial management. As a result, we will be able to incur several major expenses this year, including two volumes of the *WIF Studies* journal and the WIF conference in Dallas.



I am certain the 2008 WIF conference will be a memorable occasion. Whether you are presenting or not, I encourage all WIF members to attend, "Venez nombreux et nombreuses!."

Juliette Rogers