

Lettre de la présidente

Spring 2009

Dear WIF Colleagues,

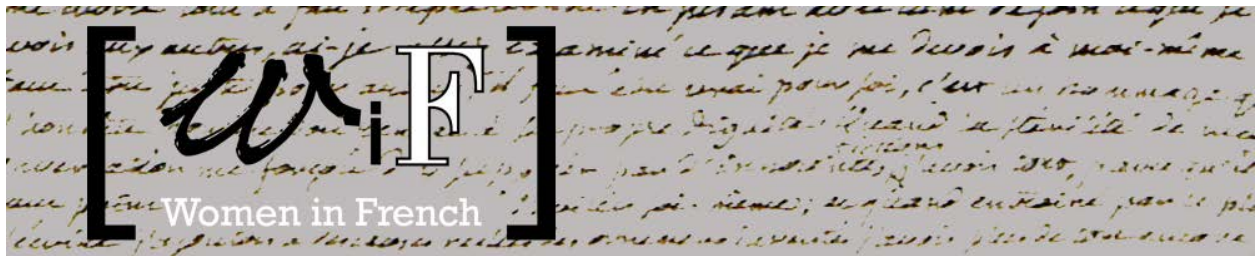
It was a great pleasure to see so many WIF colleagues at the Annual Business meeting in San Francisco in December. We had a nice sized group, a lively discussion, accompanied by good food and a wonderful setting, just two blocks from the main MLA convention hotel. Thanks to Cathy Yandell for finding this perfect venue!

We also enjoyed two fantastic WIF sessions during the 2008 MLA, with stimulating papers and follow-up questions. *Le roman noir au féminin*, organized by Monique Manopoulos, included papers by Lynn Kettler Penrod, Annik Doquire Kerszberg, Cheryl Morgan, and Linda Kick. Sylvie Reid-Blum's session, *Francophone Women Directors*, dedicated to the memory of Janis Pallister, included papers with video clips by Safoi Babana-Hampton, Valérie K. Orlando, and Joëlle F. Vitiello. Many thanks go to all the presenters for sharing your latest research with us.

I was delighted by the many intriguing panels proposed for the two Women in French sessions at the 2009 MLA Convention, to be held next December in Philadelphia. The two proposals that received the most votes were submitted by Maria Traub, Neumann College, "Memory, History, and the Literary Text," and Colette Trout, Ursinus College, « Rebelles, mécréantes et criminelles dans la littérature francophone féminine ». The deadline for sending paper proposals to these session chairs is March 15. For more details about the subject matter of each panel, please see the descriptions in the call for papers of this newsletter, or write directly to the chairs: [traubm@neumann.edu](mailto:traubm@neumann.edu) or [ctrout@ursinus.edu](mailto:ctrout@ursinus.edu)

We have also had some changes in the Executive Committee. We voted for two new regional representatives, and I am grateful to the members who ran for the two open seats. I would like to congratulate the following winners: Karin Schwerdtner (University of Western Ontario), who won the seat for New England and Eastern Canada, and Cecilia Beach (Alfred University) and Natalie Edwards (Wagner College), who tied for most votes for the New York region. They will serve together to represent New York members. We truly appreciate the work of outgoing representative Margot Irvine for New England and Eastern Canada, and are happy to have Cecilia Beach return for another term. Coming up this fall, we will be looking for new representatives for the Southern and Western regions. You will find more information about nominating someone for these positions below, in the announcement from the Nominating Committee, Annabelle Rea and Colette Trout.

At the end of December, our incredible WIF secretary, Elizabeth Locey-Hampe, came to the decision to end her term effective March 31, 2009. On behalf of the entire membership, I want to thank her profusely for her many years of dedicated service in one of the most important

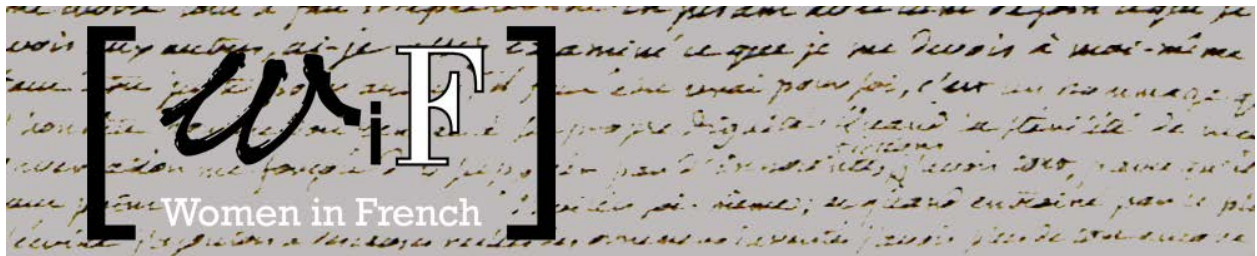


roles on the Executive Committee: the secretary not only keeps track of membership status and changes of address for all our new and renewing members, but she also supplies that information to the editors of the journal, the newsletter, the directory, and the electronic list. We will miss her very much. Because of her announcement, I am soliciting nominations for a new secretary immediately. For more information on the duties and time commitment required for this job, please check the description on the WIF website, or contact Elizabeth or me directly: [champe@emporia.edu](mailto:champe@emporia.edu) or [jmrogers@unh.edu](mailto:jmrogers@unh.edu)

Another major decision this fall was whether or not to continue with a paper newsletter or to switch to an electronic version of the *Bulletin*. With ninety-nine members voting, the final results were in favor of an all-electronic version. Therefore, you are currently holding in your hands the last paper version of the *Women in French Newsletter*. In Fall 2009, we will be sending the first newsletter by email, probably as a PDF document. It will be a significant change for our organization, but one that is both cost efficient and environmentally friendly, two needs that we are highly aware of at this moment. For those of you who wish to read a printed version of the newsletter in the future, there will be the option of clicking the “print” button on the Women in French website, or in the document that will be delivered by email.

The time has now come to make a final decision about the date and location for the next Women in French conference, in order to begin the planning process. We have had an offer from Sara Steinert Borella to have a WIF conference in Lugano, Switzerland in Spring 2011, preferably toward the end of May so that most members on a semester schedule could extend their stay in Europe after the three-day conference, if so desired. I realize that many of you are dealing with budget cuts at your home institutions and that conference travel is one of the first items to be eliminated during lean times, so travel may be more restricted now. However, if you are indeed planning to attend the next WIF conference, I would appreciate it if you could please send me an email indicating whether a conference in Lugano is possible or if you would consider hosting the next WIF conference at your own institution. Please send all emails to me by April 1 so that we can move forward with the planning details.

The economic crisis has threatened the financial security of many individuals and many institutions; I am therefore quite relieved to inform you that our Treasurer, Eileen McEwan, submitted a stable financial report for the 2008 fiscal year for Women in French. This situation is due in part to the fact that we rely entirely on our volunteers to produce the WIF Studies journal, the WIF newsletters, the Members Directory, to maintain our website, e-list, library subscriptions, and membership database, and to organize our conferences every two or three years, just to name a few of the activities of our extraordinary WIF volunteers. That enormous amount of free labor has been one of the ways that we have been able to maintain a low membership fee over the years. We agreed again at this year’s annual meeting not to raise dues: still only \$40/year or \$105/3 years for Associate and Full professors and \$25/year or \$60/3 years for all others. Membership is for the calendar year, and you may renew your 2009 membership



on the WIF website. Eileen McEwan and Nancy Virtue, our website manager, have created a secure payment page where you may renew your dues with your credit card.

In past years, we have benefited from grants received from the Services Culturels de France and the Ministère des Relations Internationales du Québec, mainly to fund speakers for our conferences, and from universities and colleges where a WIF member has solicited funds (University of Santa Clara, University of Northern Texas, and Bates College this past year). We truly appreciate these occasional grants. However, we depend completely on your membership dues to pay for everything else that we cannot volunteer for: printing costs, mailing costs, the food and meeting space for the Business Meeting at the MLA each year. During a conference year, we also try to set aside funding for international graduate students who are traveling from abroad. In 2008, for example, we gave small travel grants to seven graduate students from England, Finland, France, Slovenia, and New Zealand to give papers at the WIF conference in Dallas. We were also able to offer a reduced conference rate to all graduate students participating at the conference. If possible, we would like to continue to offer more of these small grants to graduate students to encourage their participation at our next WIF conference.

WIF will save some money by sending the newsletter electronically, but the other costs, related to the journal, the business meeting, and future WIF conferences, will likely rise. I know that many of you have probably felt the squeeze of the economic downturn already, but, if you can, please do renew your WIF membership this year, and, consider making a tax-deductible charitable contribution to WIF. To all those who made contributions in 2008, I thank you on behalf of our organization.

To conclude, I hope that you are all managing as well as can be expected in these difficult times, and I send you all my heartfelt wishes for a productive and pleasant spring.

*Juliette Rogers*