

Lettre de la présidente

Spring 2017

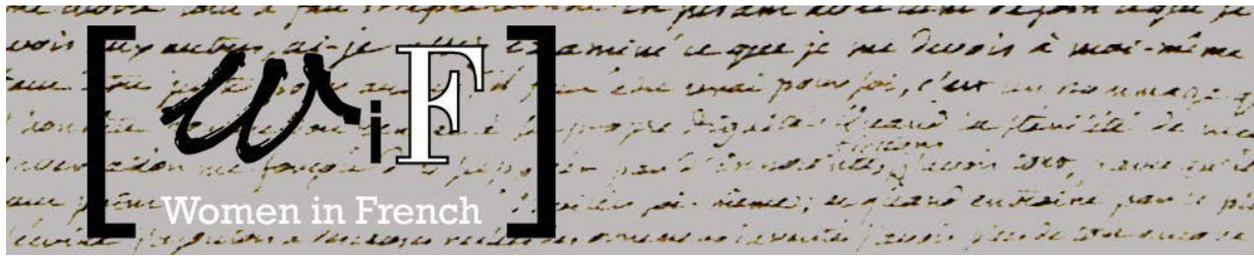
Dear Colleagues,

As President of Women in French, I am so very grateful to the many people who serve our organization in so many different ways. At the back of this Newsletter you'll find a roster with the names of the more official participants—officers, regional representatives, editors, committee members and such. But there are in fact many more people who contribute: WIF conference organizers; chairs and presenters at WIF sessions at a variety of other conferences; authors of articles in *WIF Studies* and the anonymous readers of those articles; those who prepare bibliographies and teaching dossiers for the *WIF Newsletter*; people who volunteer to represent Women in French in roundtables and panels; and every one of you who contributes to the mission of Women in French in the classroom and in your scholarship.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank in particular our out-going officers: Florence Ramond Jurney, who served as Regional Representative for the Middle Atlantic region and who organized our 2016 WIF Conference at Gettysburg College, and Méliissa-Jane Gauthier who served as our Graduate Student Representative. I'd also like to welcome our new officers and to recognize those who are continuing to serve: Theresa Kennedy, Secretary; Arline Cravens, Representative for the Central and Rocky Mountains region; Nevine El Nossery, Representative for the Great Lakes region; Mercédès Baillargeon, Representative for the Middle Atlantic region; and Leah Holz, our new Graduate Student Representative. I'd also like to thank Joëlle Vitiello and Caroline Strobbe for their 5-year terms as book review editors and Cheryl Toman who took over that role last fall.

In the December election, the WIF community voted to redefine our regional structure to correspond more closely to the MLA conference regions rather than the MLA electoral regions given that the main role of our regional representatives is to organize sessions at the regional conferences. Our nominating committee, Annabelle Rea and Colette Trout, will be working over the next few years to implement the new regional structure as the current elected representatives finish their terms.

I am looking forward to the next WIF conference in February 2018 at Florida State University in Tallahassee, organized by Aimée Boutin around the theme of *Le Bruit des Femmes*. The keynote speaker, Elizabeth McAlister, is a Professor of Religion at Wesleyan University whose research focuses on Afro-Caribbean religions including Haitian Vodou, Pentecostalism, race theory, transnational migration, and evangelical spiritual warfare. She has produced three compilations of Afro-Haitian religious music: *Rhythms of Rapture* (Smithsonian Folkways, 1995), *Angels in the Mirror*, and the CD *Rara* that accompanies her first book (<http://emcalister.faculty.wesleyan.edu/>).



The 2018 conference will also include a panel on *Camille en octobre* by Mireille Best (1943-2005), the One Book, One WIF selection for 2017-2018, and a public reading of the novel. Please see the annotated bibliography on Mireille Best prepared by Stephanie Schechner on page 16 of this newsletter. Two papers about Mireille Best are also on the programme of the WIF UK Conference in Leeds in May 2017: Kate Bonin, “Growing up Camille: The pleasures of the liminal, the hybrid, and the transgressive in Mireille Best’s *Camille en octobre* (1988)” and Stephanie Schechner, “Solidarity among Women: Recognizing and Valuing Diverse Forms of Pleasure in the Fiction of Mireille Best.”

Women in French continues to have a strong presence at many of the regional MLA conferences, as well as at conferences like Nineteenth-Century French Studies, 20th and 21st Century French and Francophone Studies, and the Colloque International George Sand. We had two sessions at the MLA Convention in January 2017—Teaching Women in French: Exploring the Boundaries (Cecilia Beach and Joyce Johnston chairs) and Writing the Self in the Age of the Selfie in French and Francophone Literatures (organized by Nicole Meyer), which was co-sponsored by the 20th- and 21st-Century French Forum, as well as a cash bar cosponsored by the Women's Caucus, Feministas Unidas, and Women in German. Eleven WIF members attended the Annual Business Meeting (see minutes p. 7).

I wish you all an excellent year and look forward to seeing many of you at the WIF conference next February if not before.

Many thanks to Cheryl Morgan for her continued service as editor of this newsletter!

Cecilia Beach
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