

ACRL WOMEN'S STUDIES NEWSLETTER



WOMEN'S
STUDIES
SECTION

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Jessica Grim, Editor
Jill Morrissey, Asst. Editor

WOMEN IN CYBERSPACE: WOMEN'S STUDIES AND THE INTERNET Women's Studies Section Midwinter Discussion Los Angeles, California

Sunday, February 6, 9:30-11:00

Join us for a Midwinter discussion meeting on Sunday, February 6, from 9:30 to 11 a.m. for what promises to be a lively exchange about how we are using the resources of the Internet and other technologies in women's studies. You are encouraged to bring copies of materials you have produced to guide faculty and students (and us!) through this maze of information. An overhead projector and screen have been requested for those of you who have transparencies, too!

Topics for our consideration include how the Internet is being used for reference service, collection development, and library instruction; the value of listservs as a means of sharing/acquiring information; how this technology impacts our work and the work of women's studies scholars and students; and much more!

Suggestions, comments, and questions can be directed to Lori Goetsch; Head, Reference Services; University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Hodges Library; Knoxville, TN 37996-1000; phone: 615/974-8553; e-mail: GOETSCH@UTKLIP.LIB.UTK.EDU.

Lori Goetsch, WSS Vice Chair/Chair-elect

MIDWINTER SOCIAL HOUR

Continuing our tradition of an informal gathering for early arrivers, the WSS Social Hour will be in the lobby bar of the Radisson Wilshire Plaza Hotel. This hotel is between Wilshire Blvd. and 6th Street (see the map on p.747 of the 9/93 *American Libraries*).

Members and visitors are welcome to mingle in the lobby bar areas, meet members of the Executive Committee, learn more about the Section, and swap travel stories while finalizing dinner plans. Brave the smog and join us before the conference begins in earnest!

May Jafari, Chair, Communications Committee

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

As the wheel of the year turns, the WSS has entered its second decade. With its continued growth in membership (almost 1,000!), new names and faces are emerging to share in the work and goals of the various committees. These efforts range from the Technical Services Committee's development of a cataloging guide for women's studies materials to the new Social Issues and Education Committee's broad charge to address often controversial societal issues in terms of their impact on women's studies and women's studies librarianship.

Midwinter in February in L.A. has an odd ring to it and will certainly be a change of pace. Please join us for the Social Hour from 5-7 on Friday somewhere in the lobby bar of the Radisson Wilshire Plaza Hotel. Members of the Executive Committee will be there to share information about the Section, but this is also the time when we look forward to catching up with old conference friends and making new ones.

Although ALA's official program of meetings will list Friday's Executive Committee meeting as 8-10 p.m., we will actually meet at the to-be-announced site at 7:30 in the fond hope of finishing by 9:30.

Member wanna-bes or members thinking about committee participation are welcome to sit in on scheduled committee meetings to learn more about their activities and

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goals. During the past year, we had far more applicants than committee positions available, which is both gratifying and frustrating. Those who did not get a committee assignment this year are encouraged to contact Vice-Chair Lori Goetsch and advise her of your interest in committee service. To encourage participation, we have moved the general membership and orientation meeting to a less conflicting time, Sunday afternoon from 4:30 to 5:30. Committee Chairs will share information about their group's functions and opportunities, and both members and visitors will have a chance to meet others within the Section.

The discussion session on Sunday morning will focus on the phenomenon that is revolutionizing librarianship: the Internet. What is its impact on women's studies? Everyone is invited to bring their Internet training guides to share at what promises to be a very useful and interesting session. Please contact Lori Goetsch for details.

My earliest memories of WSS are that it was comprised of the strongest, most inclusive and supportive women I had ever encountered. The Section has been very fortunate in having a solid foundation of strong leadership and vision. It is my hope, as the Section faces the myriad challenges of the 1990's, that the sense of closeness and unity of purpose will abide and that the Section will continue to serve as a beacon for the next generation of librarians.

Betty Glass, WSS Chair

"MAKING THE NET WORK": 1994 ANNUAL PROGRAM

The Women's Studies Section will join with the Education and Behavioral Science Section of ACRL to co-sponsor a program on gender communication at the 1994 annual meeting in Miami. The program, to be called "Making the Net Work: Is There a z39.50 for Gender Communication?", will

focus on some of the problems of gender in electronic communications and gender communication in libraries. The program will take place on Monday, June 27 from 10:30-12:30. A full roster of speakers has not yet been selected, but will include both librarians and scholars from the field of communications. Ruth Dickstein, University of Arizona, Women's Studies Section, and Judith Segal, Hollins College, Education and Behavioral Science Section, are co-chairs of the program planning committee.

Bonnie Cox, member, 1994 Miami Program Planing Committee

NEW PUBLICATIONS

The Women's Studies Librarian of the University of Wisconsin System announces the publication of two titles. *The History of Women and Science, Health, and Technology: A Bibliographic Guide to the Professions and the Disciplines* is a core bibliography which has been updated and expanded from the 1988 edition. The bibliography is organized into six sections: "Overviews," "Women in the Scientific Professions," "Health and Biology," "Home Economics/Domestic Science," "Technology," and "Books for Older Children and Young Adults". Single copies of the bibliography will be available free while supplies last from the Women's Studies Librarian, University of Wisconsin System. *WAVE: Women's AudioVisuals in English: a Guide to Nonprint Resources in Women's Studies* is an annotated listing of 800 audiovisual titles by and about women produced between 1985-1990. It is 88 pages of films, videos, audiocassettes, and filmstrips. Each entry includes information on distributor and price. WAVE is arranged in broad categories and indexed by title and subject. Price: \$2.00 (Check made payable to University of Wisconsin - Madison). Requests/orders for these titles should be sent to:

Women's Studies Librarian
University of Wisconsin System
430 Memorial Library
728 State Street

Madison, WI 53706
e-mail:
WISWSL@MACC.WISC.EDU.

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

Jacquelyn Marie attended the United Nations Human Rights Conference in Vienna, Austria in June 1993 and is compiling a selected list of international women's organizations working on human rights. She also visited the Centre and library for Gender Studies in Prague, Czech Republic and is writing an article for *Women Library Workers Journal*.

Jacquelyn Marie

BACKLASH ON WOMEN'S STUDIES IN ACADEME

The topic of the General Discussion Meeting at last years' Midwinter addressed the anxiety many section members feel about how favorably their activities in women's studies will be considered at tenure or promotion time in an era of shrinking budgets and feminist backlash.

Betty Glass, discussion leader, introduced two cases in which a librarian's activities in Women's Studies appeared to be a liability. In the first case, the librarian, "Ms. X," applied for promotion after publishing a book on women's studies which she hoped would demonstrate that her expertise in this field was an acceptable equivalent to the second master's degree required. Promotion was denied on the grounds that "outside activities" had interfered with her job -- an allegation made despite the fact that all her performance reviews had been excellent. By appealing the decision and filing a grievance under the state law, she finally won the dean's approval of her promotion. The second case was presented by another WSS member whose troubles did not begin until she applied for a promotion under a new supervisor who was unsympathetic to her work with her university's Women's Studies Department.

He grudgingly supported her promotion but with negative comments. Predictably she was not promoted at that time, but is now trying again, this time equipped with more political savvy.

These cases, as well as comments from Arnie Kahn and Sheryl Galant's unpublished article, "Maximizing Women's Chances for Promotion and Tenure in Academia" launched a discussion in which many helpful suggestions for members in a tenured or tenure-track position were shared. There proved to be much variation in the practice of different institutions. While some institutions frown on women's studies activities or fail to take it seriously, many others praise publication or participation in any ACRL function, especially if it results in national recognition.

Suggestions for enhancing the credibility of the librarian's activities in women's studies included:

- Find out as early as possible how highly women's studies are valued in your library, and if undervalued, get busy raising consciousness.
- Try to get an official title which includes the words "women's studies."
- When asking for letters of reference from faculty let them know what is most helpful to address whenever possible.

Sometimes activities which are highly regarded in the library environment are under appreciated by other faculty, and vice versa. For example, conflicts with reference and other duties may arise if the librarian asks for release time to do research or teach a course in an academic department, and shrinking budgets may reduce the amount of travel money available to the librarian for activities in national organizations. On the other hand, university faculties outside the library are generally more impressed by teaching, refereed publications and national recognition.

Other suggestions for tenure or promotion candidates include:

- Get a mentor who is familiar with your institution's policies and how they work.
- Learn to say "no" to irrelevant service assignments.
- Form networks with other women at your institution.

What does the ACRL Women's Studies Section do to help its active members in the tenure and promotion process? One reason for the group's moving from ACRL discussion group to ACRL section status was to help legitimize women's studies in the eyes of its members' institutions. Active members may also request letters of recommendation, and in some cases such letters may be sent automatically from ACRL president to all section chairs, or from the WSS chair to all executive committee members. In cases such as that of Ms. X, the section could have provided some facts about the field of Women's Studies, its interdisciplinary nature, the comparative rarity of graduate programs and the fact that many Women's Studies Librarians do not have degrees in the subject.

Going up for tenure is not the time to be modest. Women need to present themselves in the strongest and best light. Although the perceived feminist backlash may lead some to practice self-censorship by not including their relevant feminist activities on their resumes, this is probably not the best tactic. After all, the ACRL Women's Studies Section has plenty of role models who have made a successful career based on their activities in women's studies-- most notably, past president Sarah Pritchard who is now Head of the Smith College Library.

Kristine Anderson

BOOK REVIEW

Goetsch, Lori A.; and Watstein, Sarah B., eds. *On account of Sex: An Annotated Bibliography on the Status of Women in Librarianship 1987-1992*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1993. ISBN 0-8108-2701-8.

In 1984 ALA published *On Account of Sex: An Annotated Bibliography on the Status of Women in Librarianship, 1977-1981*, supplementing *The Role of Women in Librarianship, 1876-1976* (Oryx Press, 1979). ALA's Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship (COSWL) has continued bibliographic work concerning women's issues in librarianship, and its Bibliography Clearinghouse Subcommittee compiled the *On Account of Sex: 1982-1986* supplement (ALA, 1989). Under the editorship of WSS's Past Chair Sarah Watstein and Chair-Elect Lori Goetsch, COSWL members have produced the latest supplement of annotated citations on books, articles, essays, conference reports and pamphlets which address women's issues in librarianship ranging from test bias to wage discrimination, from career ladders to image, and from reentry women to burnout. Bibliographic entries are arranged chronologically. Author and Subject index headings link to numbered citations. The introduction, a citation analysis of the 1876-1989 bibliographic entries, offers recommendations for future research on women in librarianship.

Betty Glass

PROGRAM REPORT, NEW ORLEANS.

At the Women's Studies Section program, "Women's Popular Literature: Challenges for the Curriculum and Librarians," Dr. Emily Toth, Louisiana State University-Baton Rouge, addressed the impact of women's literature on academics in English Departments. Using humorous anecdotes, she revealed that faculty colleagues and literary critics frequently devalue women's

genres because such literature addresses nontraditional subject matter (in-depth discussion of personal relationships) and often contains clear thinking and blunt prose, in contrast to traditional obtuse academic verbiage. The next speaker, Carol Thurston, Austin, Texas, presented her perspective on women readers of popular fiction genres, including romances, mysteries, science fiction, and New Age variations, as well as trends in commercial publishing. She hypothesized that women's genre literature is influenced by gender bias, and thus has lower academic status than male genre fiction, i.e. westerns and mysteries. Kristin Ramsdell, California State University-Hayward, provided a brief history of popular romance fiction and current trends. She stressed that the romance genre is very diverse, and this creates difficulties for collection development and reference service. She then discussed ways to justify purchase of romance literature in academic libraries (usually sources, research collection, access tools, preservation issues, and predominate presses). Finally, Bonita Corliss, Seattle Public Library, presented an overview of lesbian popular literature, including the genres available and the role of women's presses in the last twenty years. She concluded by discussing unique collection development issues, including those related to access, book jobbers, and personal comfort zones for both library personnel and the general public. Overall, the program provided excellent insight into the challenges which face librarians dealing with women's popular literature.

Mary M. Nofsinger, member, New Orleans
WSS Conference Program Planning
Committee

NEWS NOTES

- A two-cassette set of the WSS program, "Is the 'Political-Correctness' Backlash Controlling Women's Right to Know: Information Suppression in the Information Age" is available for \$24.00 (plus \$2.00 shipping/handling)

from Teach'em, Inc., 160 E. Illinois St., Chicago, IL 60611 or via their toll free number 1-800-225-3775.

- There will be a conference devoted to women and information issues, called "Women, Information, and the Future" sponsored by Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Radcliffe College, June 17-21, 1994. For more information, contact Women, Information, and the Future, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, 10 Garden St., Cambridge, MA 02138.
- The next issue of The Electronic Journal on Virtual Culture is going to be dedicated to gender issues. The address is EJVC-L@KENTVM or EJVC-L@KENTVM.KENT.EDU.
- The Five College Women's Studies Research Center (a joint project of Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, and Smith Colleges and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst) invites applications for its Research Associate positions for 1994-95. Associates are provided with office space, library privileges at the five institutions, and the collegiality of a diverse community of feminist scholars. No financial support is available; deadline for applications is February 1. For application materials, contact the Center at Dickinson House, Box C, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA 01075 413/538-2022.

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1994 MIAMI PROGRAM PLANNING

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EDITOR'S NOTE

As we go to press with this issue of the WSS Newsletter, the fate of ACRL Section newsletters has once again teeter-tottered into safe terrain. That is, we are being funded, for this year, for two issues of the newsletter. The sharp and fast negative response to ACRL's decision for a speedy phase out of Section newsletter funding seemed to catch ACRL off guard, and presumably had a fair amount to do with the decision to reinstate funding for this year. It should be emphasized, however, that it's generally understood that the reinstatement of funding is temporary-- we await, with bated breath, the report of the Membership Communications Task Force, (appointed by ACRL last spring). In light of the likelihood that, if not now, soon, we will need to find alternative ways to communicate with WSS members, a couple steps have been taken to move us in that direction.

In the June '93 issue of the WSS newsletter we included a form querying WSS members about their e-mail access, and preferences for ways to receive WSS communication. We received over 100 responses, and, surprisingly, the majority of respondents indicated that they found acceptable, or even preferred, receiving communications from WSS electronically. The Communications Committee will work with the results of that query in formulating recommendations for the future of communications within the Section.

On a more immediate front, this issue of the WSS newsletter is being distributed electronically, via FEMINIST, in addition to being produced and distributed in the time-honored paper edition. FEMINIST is the listserv maintained by the Feminist Task Force of ALA - if you are not a subscriber to FEMINIST and would like to be, send the following message to LISTSERV@MITVMA.MIT.EDU:

SUB yourfirstname yourlastname FEMINIST

Finally, I'm very pleased to announce that Jill Morrissey has agreed to be Assistant Editor of the Women's Studies Section newsletter, and will be Editor in 94/95. Jill has a master's degree in English/Women's Studies from Bucknell University, and just graduated with her MLS from the University of Pittsburgh. She is currently working in an interim position as reference librarian/women's studies bibliographer at the University of Connecticut. Welcome, Jill!

Material for the June issue of the newsletter can be sent to either of us:

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Errata: Due to the cut in newsletter funding from ACRL last year, the June '93 issue was mistakenly numbered Vol. 8, No. 1 & 2. We have numbered the current issue Vol. 8, No. 2, in order to re-establish the regularity of the numbering for the WSS newsletter.
-- The Editors

**ACRL WOMEN'S STUDIES SECTION
1994 MIDWINTER (LOS ANGELES)
COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE**

FRIDAY FEB 4

2-4 Miami 1994 Program Ctte.
5-7 SOCIAL HOUR-Radisson Wilshire Plaza
Hotel
7:30-9:30 EXECUTIVE CTTE. (This will read 8-10
in the ALA Meeting Program)

SATURDAY FEB 5

8:30-11 Technical Services Ctte.
11:30-12:30 Social Issues/Education Ctte.
2-4 Communications Ctte.
2-4 Publications Ctte.

SUNDAY FEB 6

9:30-11 Discussion Session
2-4 Collection Development Ctte.
2-4 Communications Ctte.
2-4 Publications Ctte.
4:30-5:30 General Orientation & Membership Meeting

MONDAY FEB 7

8-9:45 Social Issues/Education Ctte. (This will read
9-11 in the ALA Meeting Program)
11:30-12:30 Collection Development Ctte.
2-4 Miami 1994 Program Ctte.
2-4 Chicago 1995 Program Ctte.

TUESDAY FEB 8

8:30-11 EXECUTIVE CTTE.

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