



WOMEN'S  
STUDIES  
SECTION

# WOMEN'S STUDIES SECTION NEWSLETTER

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Fall 1998

*Issued by the Women's Studies Section, Association of College and Research Libraries  
a division of the American Library Association*

## Women's Studies Discussion Meeting

**Monday, February 1, 1999**  
**9:30 am – 11:00 am**  
**(location to be arranged)**

How can the Women's Studies Section better serve women's studies librarianship? Are there new directions in women's studies scholarship that we should be supporting? What can the Section do to help us all deal with the growth of theory, greater interdisciplinarity, proliferating electronic resources, inadequate representation of small and alternative press materials in our libraries, the political and economic climate on campus, career path for women's studies librarians, demands for greater technological sophistication and other pressing issues? Are there new projects we might undertake, new programs we should offer or new committees we might form? Is our current structure responsive to the needs of our members? Come and discuss future directions for the Women's Studies Section.

*-Marlene Manoff  
Associate Head/Collection Manager  
Humanities Library  
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**Join us at the Mid-Winter Social Hour!**

***Sunday, January 31, 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.***

Clarion Suites Convention Center  
1010 Race Street  
215-922-1730  
(1/2 block from the Convention Center)

**Women's Studies Section Newsletter**

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The *WSS Newsletter* welcomes contributions from readers. Send articles, items of interest, and news to the editor or to the appropriate column editor, preferably in electronic format.

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**WSS Officers 1998/99:**

Kristin Gerhard, Chair  
Marlene Manoff, Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect  
Sara Brownmiller, Secretary  
Mary Faith Pankin, Member-at-large  
G. Margaret Porter, Member-at-large

Visit WSS on the Web:

[www.lib.siu.edu/dcallaha/wsshp.html](http://www.lib.siu.edu/dcallaha/wsshp.html)

**Notes from the Chair**

When I think about meetings and programs of the Women's Studies Section over the years, what stands out to me is the quality of conversation. Meetings and programs bring us together to talk, listen, disagree, define, evaluate, and rethink our individual contributions to women's studies scholarship.

We talk about balancing our women's studies responsibilities against the rest of our jobs. We learn how women's studies folk at other institutions are balancing their collection needs against their financial limitations. We educate publishers and vendors about the needs of women's studies scholars. We discover new publications and rediscover old ones in new forms.

As a new ALA member, I was struck by the openness of Women's Studies Section members. They were firm in their commitment that everyone in the room—new members, non-members, and members of long standing—be allowed to join in that ongoing conversation.

The conversation belongs to all of us. Changes in recent issues of the newsletter reflect the section's attempts to support members who do not or cannot attend ALA. We will continue to seek avenues that let your voices be heard. The *WSS Newsletter* welcomes contributions by all members on any topic. Those who do attend Midwinter can join into the conversation at the discussion or membership meetings. It is my hope that you, as a section member, will take whatever opportunities you can to contribute your ideas, hopes, and concerns. The conversation truly belongs to us all.

*-Kristin H. Gerhard  
Chair, ACRL Women's Studies Section  
Collections Office  
Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa  
kgerhard@iastate.edu*

### *Anthology of Women's Literature*

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* recently paid notice to a new anthology of English Literature, *The Longman Anthology of British Literature*, as an alternative to what has been the standard text of British literature survey courses, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. The new anthology, according to *Chronicle* writer Scott Heller, features a post-New Critical approach to literary studies that not only attempts to offer some context for the literature anthologized, but also increases the number of women represented well beyond the 40 who appeared in *Norton's* last (1993) edition (p. A18-19).

The new edition of *Norton's*, due out shortly, is expected, like *Longman's*, to show increased representation of women writers, but both anthologies, despite their expanded coverage of previously neglected writers, still can only offer a sampling of a vast and diverse body of literature. No doubt these standard anthologies will continue to supply college literature survey courses with inexpensive, ready-made texts, but they also remind us to look closely for publications that give space to writers not represented in their pages.

An increasing number of more specialized anthologies are being published each year, especially anthologies of women writers, both western and non-western. For libraries that cannot afford to purchase as many individual novels and books of poetry as they would like, these collections offer a way to introduce curious students to a wide array of literature. While I cannot detail all of the titles that have appeared in recent years, I would like to list a few that hint at the variety of interesting collections currently in print.

*Daughters of Africa: An International Anthology of Words and Writings by women of African descent from the ancient Egyptian to the present.* New York: Pantheon, 1992.

*British Women Poets of the Romantic Era: An Anthology.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U P, 1997

*Cabbage & Bones: An Anthology of Twentieth Century Irish American Women's Fiction.* New York: Henry Holt, 1997.

*Cruel Fictions, Cruel Realities: Short Stories by Latin American Women Writers.* Pittsburgh: Latin American Literary Review Press, 1997.

*Honey, Hush! An Anthology of African American Women's Humor.* New York: W.W. Norton, 1997.

*Lay by Your Needles Ladies & the Pen; Writing Women in England, 1500-1700.* New York: Oxford U P, 1997.

*Modern Drama by Women, 1800-1920: An International Anthology.* New York: Routledge, 1996.

*Popular Fiction by Women 1660-1730: An Anthology.* New York: Oxford U P, 1997.

*Nine Black Women: Anthology of Nineteenth Century writers in the United States, Canada, Bermuda, and the Caribbean.* New York: Routledge, 1997

*Water Lilies: An Anthology of Spanish Women Writers from the Fifteenth Through the Nineteenth Century.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

*The Whistling Bird: Women Writers of the Caribbean.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998.

*Women's Poetry in France, 1965-1995: A Bilingual Anthology.* Winston-Salem: Wake Forest U P, 1997.

*Writing Women in Modern China: An Anthology of Literature by Chinese Women from the Early Twentieth Century.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

\* Heller, Scott. "More women and less play for dead white men characterize new anthology." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 45(6). Oct 2 1998. A18-19.

-Regan Brumagen  
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## Webography

The WSS Collection Development Committee maintains *WSSLINKS*, a directory of websites to support the study of Women and Gender, [www.library.yale.edu](http://www.library.yale.edu). Sites are arranged by broad topic and include Archives, Art and Film, Culture, Education, Lesbian Sites, Music, Philosophy Politics, Science, and more. Beginning with this issue, the *WSS Newsletter* will publish brief, annotated webographies. As websites continue to proliferate, we hope to alert members to interesting, useful new sites as well as established sites of note. The newsletter welcomes webographies on topics of general or scholarly interest to women's studies librarians. Please send entries to [deleskic@hartwick.edu](mailto:deleskic@hartwick.edu)

## Medieval Women

*Medieval Feminist Index*. This attractively designed website provides indexing to leading medieval studies and history journals, and collected essays that publish articles on women's experience, sexuality, and gender in the middle ages. The site is coordinated by Margaret Schauss (Haverford College) who is assisted by an international team of scholars and librarians. An advisory board, which reads like *Who's Who in medieval studies*, guides the site's development. The index can be searched by author, title or subject. MFI publishes a list of broad subject areas such as archaeology, law, daily life and literature. A list of journals and collections indexed is provided with links to related web sites. MFI is a well designed, easy to navigate, and scholarly resource. Since MFI is continually updated and changes frequently, users will want to return again and again.

<http://www.haverford.edu/library/reference/mschaus/mfi/mfi.html>

*Matrix: a resource for the study of women's religious communities, 500-1500* is also a scholarly site built from data collected in European archives in the 1980s by medieval feminist historians. The site is in the process of development with new data, information, and enhancements continually appearing. Under the guidance of professors Katherine Gill, (Boston College), and Lisa Bitel, (University of Kansas), the site seeks contributions to the community profiles, image database, and online articles. Community profiles that document the collective lives of women religious with data such as population, social status of members, relative wealth, and the variety of administrative, charitable, and spiritual roles women filled, are the most developed feature. The site has an image database, a glossary, and documents.

<http://matrix/divinity.yale.edu/MatrixWebData/matrix.html>

A bibliography of several hundred citations including published primary and secondary sources, plus archival information is in process of being migrated from an outdated software program to the web site. The advisory board shares with MFI many of the same important names in medieval studies.

*Early Women Composers* Some digging around in this site reveals the sponsor to be the International Alliance for Women in Music. This organization's website documents and promotes information about women in music. Early Women Composers intends to answer the question "Who were the early women composers?" and "What did they do?" The site has Parallel Illustrations by Early Women Artists and covers Ancient, Byzantine and Early Gothic; Medieval; Renaissance; Early Baroque; Late Baroque; and Early Classical periods. There are just under fifty entries during the period 500- 1500 and each entry contains some biographical information, commentary from reputable resources, and a discography. Links are provided to music catalogs and publishers. The site contains not only the chronology and CD discography, but also a list of reference materials, midi soundfiles, and a list of parallel illustrations by women artists. Complex in content and design, this is a beautifully illustrated site that would benefit from an editorial statement, overview, and attributions.

<http://150.252.8.92/www/iawm/pages/>

Other notable scholarly resources:

*Bibliography of Works by and About Women Writers of the Middle Ages* by Robbins Library, Fordham University, a reliable and extensive bibliography of primary sources  
<http://corky.fordham.edu/halsall/med/womenbib.html>

*Women Writers of the Middle Ages* by Bonnie Duncan, Millersville University, a selection of e-texts by major religious and secular writers. <http://www.millersv.edu/~english/homepage/duncan/medfem/medfem.html>

- Marilyn Dunn

## Women's Organizations in ALA

### "A World in Motion: Refugees and Resources"

The numbers can be overwhelming: ninety active conflicts in the world today have forced fifty million people to flee war, persecution, and famine at home. ACRL's Women's Studies Section and Asian, African, and Middle Eastern Studies Section presented the program "A World in Motion: Refugees and Resources," which examined the dual challenge of providing up-to-date information to refugees and relief workers while also preserving the historical record of this fast-moving world.

Charles Dambach, president of the National Peace Corps Association, spoke of his group's work advocating the "importance of positive U.S. engagement in foreign affairs." Libraries can play a key role by providing free access to information and public gathering places. Returned Peace Corps volunteers often take short-term assignments overseas where they need timely political and economic information. Dambach stressed that librarians need to better educate the public about library resources and the personalized help that librarians offer.

A far more complex problem is getting information to relief workers in the field. Judy Benjamin of the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children noted that field workers often know little about the cultural and political histories of their host regions. Coordinating efforts among relief organizations is also difficult; when Benjamin worked in Rwanda in 1994, the forty humanitarian organizations there struggled to share information between camps and over borders. The particular vulnerabilities of women, adolescents, and children in refugee camps have been researched by the WCRWC and other groups, but they have no way of sharing their knowledge. We now know that an *estimated 80% of women on both sides of the conflict were sexually assaulted*; if aid workers had known this, they could have provided better medical and psychological care. Since field workers need access to research on everything from reproductive health to the location of refugee camp water taps, information clear-houses would provide invaluable assistance.

Collecting the publications that document this changing world poses special challenges. Carolyn Brown of the Library of Congress Area Studies Section noted that traditional country-based acquisitions programs are insufficient when faced with colonial and postcolonial writings, publications of nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations, and ephemeral documents of refugee and immigrant life. As Brown observed, "Embedded in these publications are important keys to the future" that must be preserved.

-Kristin Nielsen  
University of Georgia Libraries

There are several organizations within ALA that focus on women's and feminist issues in addition to ACRL's Women's Studies Section. These include the Feminist Task Force, the Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship, and the LAMA Women Administrators Discussion Group.

The Feminist Task Force (FTF) is part of the Social Responsibilities Round Table. The current co-coordinators are Rosemary McAndrew and Adriene Lim. From the SCRRT's Task Force web page, FTF:

"Brings active feminism to ALA. Focuses on women's issues and experiences and on the exchange of information and resources on women's issues. Serves as a vehicle for feminist activism within the profession through coalition building, programs and activities such as mentoring and promotion of women's presses. Publishes quarterly newsletter, *Women in Libraries*". FTF also sponsors a listserv, FEMINIST. For more information on FEMINIST, see the FTF home page.

URL: <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~holman/FTF/>

The Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship (COSWL) is a standing committee of the ALA Council. The current chair is Theresa A. Tobin. From the *ALA Handbook of Organization*, COSWL's charge is:

"To officially represent the diversity of women's interest within ALA and to ensure that the Association considers the rights of the majority (women) in the library field. To promote and initiate the collection, analysis, dissemination, and coordination of information on the status of women in librarianship. To coordinate the activities of ALA units that consider questions having special relevance for women. To identify lags, gaps and possible discrimination in resources and enhance the opportunities and the image of women in the library profession, thus raising the level of consciousness concerning women. To establish contacts with committees on women within other professional groups and to officially represent ALA concerns at interdisciplinary meetings on women's equality. To provide council and Membership with reports needed for the establishment of policies and actions related to the status of women in librarianship, and monitor ALA units to ensure consideration of the rights of women."

URL: <http://www.ala.org/coswl/>

The LAMA Women Administrators Discussion Group is part of the Library Administration and Management Association of ALA. The current chair is Cheryl C. Kugler. According to the *ALA Handbook of Organization*, LAMA's charge is:

"To provide a forum for discussion of problems of particular concern to women in administrative positions."

URL: <http://www.ala.org/lama/committees/div/wadmin.html>

For additional groups related to women and librarianship, see the Web page of the WSS. Near the bottom of the page is a list with links to these and other groups.

URL: <http://www.lib.siu.edu/dcallaha/wsshp.html>

-Megan Adams

 **WSS Meeting Schedule for the Philadelphia, PA Conference**

<b>Sunday, January 31</b>	9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	All WSS Committee Meetings
	4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	General Membership Meeting
	6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Social Hour (Clarion Suites Convention Center, 1010 Race St.)
<b>Monday, February 1</b>	9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Section Discussion Meeting
	2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Executive Committee Meeting

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