



# Women's Studies Section Newsletter

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### "Call Yourself a Feminist!": Second Annual WSS Awards

At this year's annual program in San Francisco, the Section honored two WSS members who have taken new and innovative approaches to move mountains in their careers. The second annual awards for Significant Achievement and Career Achievement in Women's Studies Librarianship went to Marilyn Dunn and Sarah Pritchard respectively.



Marilyn Dunn  
Significant Achievement

Dunn, College Librarian at Hartwick College, was acknowledged for her work as managing editor of *Matrix*, a singular collaboration among scholars, librarians, and technology specialists, which produces a superb web database of materials that promote scholarship in medieval women's studies. (<http://matrix.bc.edu/>)

The Career Award recognized the unparalleled achievements of Sarah Pritchard, one of the "founding mothers" of Women's Studies and feminist librarianship. Now University Librarian at the University of California, Santa Barbara, Sarah noted that among other things, her career demonstrated that "you can call yourself a feminist and still get promoted!"



Sarah Pritchard  
Career Achievement

--Joan Ariel

## Notes from the Chair

As I write this, the events of September 11 are still fresh in everyone's mind. Hopefully all of your family, friends and loved one are safe. Unless you live or work in New York City, Washington, D.C., or western Pennsylvania, or have been activated by the military, you are probably back at your job and home, and back to a usual routine.

Everyone is dealing with the events in her or his own way. It is much more difficult for me to just write a few thoughts about the section or ACRL business or such matters than it would have been. I have no profound words to offer, and yet not even mentioning September 11 seems a terrific omission.

We keep being told that the world is different now. We keep being told that no one knows exactly what the future will hold (and no one seems to point out that this was always true). Discussions are taking place at the workplace, social events, and everywhere people are gathering about the recent events and what our personal and the United States' collective responses should be. What each of us believes the United States' government's response should be is one of those matters that people of goodwill may disagree on.

I think one thing that stands constant in this somewhat uncertain future is the need to provide accurate information. When I received e-mails about various vendors providing free information to the public about terrorism, the September 11 attacks, and background information on the political situation, I realized what an advantage I have, being able to access such information, literally 24 hours a day. In a world where communication is as fast as sending an e-mail, where Nostradamus prophecy hoaxes can spread around the globe in hours, it is even more important to provide accurate information. We are in a very privileged position.

With the increased emphasis on an area of the world and religious faiths that many of us are not familiar with, there are things that we can do, both at work and outside the workplace, to provide information, or to make people aware that information exists. In addition, information to help people deal with the tragedies of September 11 and issues such as death/grieving and terrorism is needed. Creating pathfinders, bibliographies, and webpages with links to relevant information are traditional library responses. Because of the horrible events, our public is listening. Take this time to educate about the plight of women in the Middle East, particularly in Afghanistan. We might also share with other Women's Studies librarians the actions we are taking to provide information. As the future unfolds, I know that accurate information will become more and more important. No matter what our job description, we are information professionals. I am glad to be associated with this profession at such a time. And I am grateful for all of my WSS colleagues and friends.

-Connie Phelps  
[cphelps@uno.edu](mailto:cphelps@uno.edu)

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## Women Moving Mountains: Women and Organizations

*The program was dedicated to Mary Rosenbloom, WSS member and former Chair of the Publications Committee, who died unexpectedly this past spring. Mary contributed significantly to the work of the Section and to women's studies librarianship and will be sorely missed by all.*

The Women's Studies Section moved mountains in San Francisco. Approximately 100 Section members and colleagues attended an exceptional program on women and organizations. Kathryn Deiss, formerly a program officer with the Association for Research Libraries and now working with Chicago Public Library, was the guest speaker. WSS Chair Teresa Tobin's introductory remarks made it clear that women continue to move mountains in many and varied ways. Deiss then took up the question of women and organizations, focusing on an assessment of where we currently stand, a review of relevant research, an exploration of both success factors and barriers to advancement for women and for underrepresented groups, and finally an analysis of organizational culture and women. She framed her remarks in the context of three refreshing and thought-provoking biases:

"we can create the society we want to live in; people are essentially good; and people create defensive systems out of fear."

Deiss took the pulse of organizations with a "required romp through the data." We can discern significant progress for women evidenced, for example, by the fact that women now occupy 51 out of 111 ARL academic directorship positions with equal salaries on average. At the same time, in a general workforce now composed of 50% women, an equity revolution indisputably remains to be fought to counter the gender and race-based pay gaps that have stubbornly persisted for almost 50 years. While we celebrate advances, Deiss argued, we also need "to keep asking very, very provocative questions of the people in our organizations about why things are the way they are."



**Kathryn Deiss of Chicago  
Public Library headlines  
the WSS Program in  
San Francisco**

In reviewing recent research, Deiss cited the "glass ceiling" investigations done by the Center for Creative Leadership (<http://www.ccl.org>) whose mission is "to advance the understanding, practice and development of leadership for the benefit of society worldwide." It came as no surprise that women have to work harder than men to achieve the same recognition, or that women are expected to play multiple roles in society and in the workplace. Distressingly enough, however, this research also revealed that if women are breaking the glass ceiling in many places, they are generally doing so by adhering to "a narrow band of acceptable behavior," making required "identity adjustments" and taking on certain "masculine characteristics" in order to succeed. With this narrow band, women and men share some success factors including help from above; ability to adapt; willingness to take career risks; and the desire to succeed. At the same time, while factors for men also included varied and challenging assignments and being decisive, only women had to be "easy to be with." The bottom line for women is that they are expected to have more strengths and fewer faults

than men; they need to be "nice" but also tougher, take more career risks, have a stronger desire to succeed, and have a more impressive presence. Does this make you recall that bestseller *Dress for Success* or the differential acceptance of the sloppily dressed men in your library?

Further CCL research on women and men of color identified additional barriers to advancement from the expected prejudice and "white guys comfort dealing with one's own" to the challenges of managing multiple identities. People from underrepresented groups consistently confront the disturbing questions of "how much can I be like me?" and "how much of my culture can I safely represent?" In the library field, fortunately, a number of programs have been initiated to dismantle some of these barriers and to increase equity and diversity.

The final portion of Deiss' presentation, the quest of organizational culture, resonated strongly with many in the audience. Building on the works of Joan Kofodimos on Work Life Balance<sup>i</sup> and of organizational psychologist Edgar Schein of the MIT Sloan School of Management<sup>ii</sup>, Deiss offered compelling evidence that women are working in cultures that reinforce behaviors that are unhealthy for women, and, for that matter, for men as well. She argued that our workplace cultures- "created by white guys, nice white guys, but white guys"-reflect a mastery orientation of an idealized image of the self as opposed to self-realization, thus getting in the way of self fulfillment and true gratification. We all contribute to this kind of culture by not questioning its assumptions, by not stopping to reflect on whether it's really healthy to be married to our jobs or, as Deiss put it, "gerbiling" on the workaholic treadmill. In our collective interest, the feminist workplace agenda needs to promote the key elements of a balanced organizational culture in our libraries. Deiss encouraged us to return to our organizations and ask a key question: what would you change about the way we work here? We can strive to normalize the conversation about how we work, not just what we do, and about the culture that shapes both, while we visualize and implement alternative ways to get the job done. In so doing, we will redefine success and commitment, or at least clarify these, so that, with women continuing to move mountains, we will transform our organizations for the life benefit of all.

-Joan Ariel  
University of California, Irvine  
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<sup>i</sup> Joan R. Kofodimos. *Balancing Act: How Managers Can Integrate Successful Careers and Fulfilling Personal Lives*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.

<sup>ii</sup> Edgar Schein. *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. 2d ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992.

See Kathryn's Presentation Notes & Bibliography on the WSS Website:

<http://www.ala.org/acrl/wgss/proj.html>

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## **Introduction to Women's Issues at ALA Sparks Lively Discussion**

Over 40 people attended this year's Introduction to Women's Issues at ALA where topics that affect women who work and use libraries were discussed. After an introduction to the various women's groups of interest to ALA members and an invitation to become involved, Theresa Tobin, Women's Studies Section Chair, led the group in a conversation about the concerns of women in libraries and librarianship. Included in the topics was the risk of losing ALA policies which helped women to obtain equality in the profession, including the posting of salaries in American Libraries job postings. Further discussion of salaries included suggestions to benchmark salaries against the male-dominated Information Technology profession. It was also suggested that library schools start to offer classes on how to negotiate salary similar to those offered in MBA programs. There was also an emphasis on the need to support better salaries for para-professional staff, who are primarily women and are often part-time employees.

Other topics for discussion included issues of collection development and filtering. Concerns were voiced about the future of small presses and the need for inclusion of alternative resources, smaller press material, gay and lesbian resources, and feminist material in mainstream electronic resources such as Proquest.

As happened in other forums at this year's conference, the issue of virtual participation in ALA was discussed. The ability to participate via electronic means would help women who could not regularly attend ALA but wished to become more involved in the association's activities. Suggestions were also made for creation of short-term service assignments that may be more appealing to newer librarians. Included in this part of the discussion was the need to encourage women to participate in electronic discussion groups.

A final area for lengthy discussion was the relationship between longer serving librarians and those new to the profession. Both groups discussed the stereotypes they find during interaction with other librarians. Suggestions were made for the implementation of mentoring programs to help bridge the gap between generations of librarians. Most participants agreed that it is important to continue the dialog between generations of librarians and that the women's groups of ALA may want to consider programming that will address this issue.

-Dolores Fidishun  
Vice Chair/Chair-Elect  
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## **WSSLINKS Seeks Asst. Ed/Editor**

WSSLINKS is looking for someone to take over responsibility for overall management of WSSLINKS. This would include maintaining the top level page (<http://libraries.mit.edu/wgsslinks>) which might be moved to the ALA server, taking over the email list (adding and subtracting people as needed), making sure people update their pages, finding new people to take over when someone can no longer keep up their page, providing information for people taking on new pages and attending the WSS Executive Committee meeting at ALA Annual. The person who agrees to do this would become the Assistant Editor for a year and then Editor the following year. Anyone interested should contact Marlene Manoff ([mmanoff@mit.edu](mailto:mmanoff@mit.edu)).

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## Women's Studies Section Committee Reports

### Electronic Resources & Access Committee

Members conducted a final review of the serials core list and decided to check the URLs in this document once a year and check everything else every two years. Maintenance tasks will include checking for inclusion in aggregator databases; checking for new/ceased/changed titles; checking indexing; and checking for changes in publisher addresses.

The committee agreed on an assortment of places to advertise our new resource: WMST-L, Wisconsin web and print products, WSS collection development site, WSS list, WSS newsletter, NWSA list and newsletter, ACRL New England women's studies group (and other regional groups), and COLLDEV-L.

They also brainstormed ideas for a new project and decided to locate (and describe) high quality web sites that are digitizing or otherwise preserving historical information on women. The focus will be on sites that meet the following criteria: mostly full text or primary source material, .edu sites, historical, free, and/or pertaining to United States.

We will examine such elements as: how far along the creators are in the project; how far back are they going; source(s) of funding; scope comprehensiveness, coverage; source of material; contact information; media types; format; searchability; software/equipment requirements; any restrictions. A preliminary attempt was made to divide up the US in order to evenly distribute the work.

-Lesley Pease

### Program Planning Committee

The committee met to discuss the current status of the program for the 2002 ALA Conference in Atlanta, GA. The working title is "Technical Differences: Women, Technology and Libraries." Joan Korenman has agreed to be the keynote speaker. Joan is the Director of the Center for Women and Information Technology at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. In 1991, she established WMST-L. In April 2001, she was named one of the Top 25 Women on the Web by San Francisco Women on the Web. Other speakers will be Dolores Fidishun, Kristin Gerhard and Kelly Hovendick.

Connie Phelps reported on an ACRL Conference Program Planning meeting, and the discussion that had taken place regarding possible methods of how ACRL might apportion funding to the sections for programming.

There was discussion of the program proposal that had been submitted to ACRL, such as revisions to the estimated audience size.

The committee received a suggestion for an alternate title, but deferred a decision.

-Connie Phelps

### Research Committee

The Ad Hoc Research Committee became a regular committee at the end of ALA Annual 2001. Kris Gerhard will be the Chair as Dolores Fidishun will be Vice Chair/Chair-Elect of the Women's Studies Section.

The committee brainstormed ideas regarding Annual 2003 as there was interest in doing a program on publishing in Women's Studies and Women's Studies librarianship. The committee agreed to help and discussed ideas for possible presenters.

The committee performed a final review of the committee web site created by Jennifer Gilley and approved it. Dolores took the web site to the Publications Committee for their approval and for continued review by the Executive Committee who approved it.

It was decided to continue posting Calls for Papers and to leave the criteria as papers and presentations that deal with Women's Studies librarianship or Women's Studies issues. In addition, minor changes to the Research Interest Profile were made and the committee will seek approval through the appropriate channels before posting it.

-Dolores Fidishun

### **Publications Committee**

The Publications Committee completed a revision of the Publications Manual and it has been put on the WSS webpage at: <http://www.ala.org/acrl/wgss/pubmanual.html> (under Manuals and Guides). All committees and committee members should become aware of the procedures for proposing and developing publications including web-based publications.

The committee approved a project proposed by the Collection Development Committee and discussed ideas with other committees.

-Ruth Dickstein

### **Instruction Committee**

Members present reviewed current committee projects. At midwinter, the committee had discussed creating a web page which would be a table or list evaluating online databases for Women's Studies instruction. These evaluations would focus on searching techniques and tips and would be designed for librarians who do course related instruction for Women's Studies classes.

Other discussion revolved around the question - what would be the most useful product for librarians who do instruction for Women's Studies classes? Some of the ideas included an evaluation of specific features of Women's Studies databases for use by librarians who have limited access to subscription-based resources. However, after talking with the Collection Development Committee it was discovered that Amy Wallace has already created and is currently maintaining a comparison chart titled "Electronic Resources Information and Assessment" which focuses on content, cost, pricing, access, etc. It was then decided by the Instruction Committee that there is need for an additional webpage with a specific focus on instruction components of available databases.

Discussion also took place concerning the role of information literacy for Women's Studies. Should the committee create a tutorial or education-based product? Develop a project based on "Critical Thinking" skills for students? It was agreed that whatever project was decided upon should discuss and tie in theoretical analysis, communication theory, issues of power and issues of neutrality. A potential audience for such a product was discussed. Should this be for librarians, teaching faculty, students or all three? The committee brainstormed ideas and compiled a list of possibilities.

-Cindy Ingold

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## **WSS Achievement in Women's Studies Librarianship Awards**

The Women's Studies Section awards are given annually to honor distinguished academic librarians who have made outstanding contributions to Women's Studies through accomplishments and service to the profession. The awards recognize those who have made long-standing contributions to the field during a career (the Career Achievement award) and those who have made significant one-time contributions (the Significant Achievement award).

For details and nomination forms see:

<http://www.ala.org/acrl/wgss/awardtop.html>

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## **WSS Midwinter Conference Meeting Schedule**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Place</b>
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Awards Committee (closed)	Fri., Jan 18	4:30-5:30	Royal Sonesta, Iberville
Awards Committee (closed)	Sun., Jan. 20	9:30-11	Embassy Suites, Diamond A
All Committees	Sun., Jan. 20	9:30-11	Morial Convention Center 393
Core List Compilers Meeting	Sun., Jan 20	10:30-11:30	Morial Convention Center 393 (unofficial meeting)
Membership Meeting	Sun., Jan. 20	4:30-5:30	Morial Convention Center 295
Discussion Group	Mon., Jan.21	9:30-11	Morial Convention Center 279
Executive Committee	Mon., Jan. 21	11:30-1:30	Morial Convention Center 339

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

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#### **WSS Officers 2000/2001:**

Connie Phelps, Chair  
Dolores Fidishun, Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect  
Sue McFadden, Secretary  
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Send comments about the WGSS website to: [Carrie Dunham-LaGree](mailto:Carrie Dunham-LaGree).

URL: <http://libr.org/wgss/newsletter/2001fall.html>

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