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NEWSLETTER

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## Midwinter Discussion Focuses on the Hows and Whys of Subject Guides: *(Re)thinking Subject Guides: Interactivity Unbound*

Over 65 people attended *(Re)thinking Subject Guides: Interactivity Unbound*, the Women's Studies Section (WSS) Discussion Group on subject guides at the ALA Midwinter meeting this past January. Diana King, WSS Vice-chair/Chair-elect, facilitated the discussion, which examined and explored the best practices in subject guide technology, creation, and formation. The conversation touched on the use of wikis, blogs, social bookmarking, and commercial products in the creation of both subject guides and course specific guides. The diverse group of participants shared their own best practices, successes, and failures and exchanged ideas and product names and descriptions. Far from being simply a forum for practical advice on the creation of subject guides, the conversation also served as an opportunity for participants to question why we use subject guides, who we create them for, how and why we highlight some resources over others, and whether or not they are and will remain useful tools that meet the needs of teaching and research.

The librarians that participated in the discussion all used a wide range of formats for their subject guides. While some have created wikis and blogs, others are using tutorials, del.icio.us tag clouds, RSS feeds and widgets, and publishing systems such as LibGuides. Many use instant messenger (IM) tools to further connect with their patrons, embedding IM widgets into their blogs and web guides. The conversation touched on the drawbacks and benefits of all of these formats, and raised a number of interesting questions that led to more in depth discussions.

One key issue focused on the use of wikis and raised questions about control, usability, and design. While wikis can be a wonderful tool for creating subject guides, they tend not to be used to their full potential in most libraries. Many librarians have found that faculty and students are reluctant or unwilling to make changes or additions to subject guide wikis, forcing librarians to maintain and update content individually.

Though most wikis are quick and easy to change, their purpose is not met when all changes are made by one person. On the other hand, several librarians expressed concern wikis can be vandalized, while others notes that such collaborative tools aren't encouraged at their institutions. A final point of discussion focused on the fact that in larger institutions, the potential for wikis to overwhelm a library website is very real. Multiple librarians creating multiple guides in wiki format can raise problems with institutional branding and student recognition of a library specific guide. *(continued on page 4)*

### Inside this issue:

Discussion Focuses on Subject Guides	1
Notes From the Chair	2
WSS Programs at Annual	3
Newsletter Editor Opening	3
WSS Midwinter Social	5
Member News	5
Committee Reports	6
WSS Member Profiles	7
Welcome New Members	8

**Women's Studies Section**

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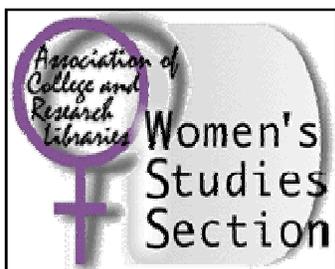
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The *WSS Newsletter* welcomes contributions from members. Please send articles, items of interest, and news to the editors, preferably in electronic format.  
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**WSS Officers 2007-2008:**

Jennifer R. Gilley, Chair  
Diana King, Vice-Chair/  
Chair-Elect  
Piper Martin, Secretary  
Cynthia Johnson, Member-at-large  
Marilyn A. Dunn, Member-at-large

**Notes from the Chair****Happy Anniversary to us!**

2008 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Women's Studies Section and I must say, we have much to celebrate. The Section began in 1983 as a discussion group and here we are, 25 years later, an active and vital organization with around 600 members and growing.

To celebrate this monumental achievement we will be holding a special 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Social at ALA Annual in Anaheim. It will be a catered event held on Saturday night, June 28<sup>th</sup>, from 7-8:30, and will feature a multimedia presentation from Dolores Fidishun commemorating our history as framed by the larger history of the women's movement during this period. Many thanks go to Marilyn Dunn of the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at Radcliffe and to Eileen Lawrence of Alexander Street Press for their generous support of this event. The Feminist Task Force, as the foremothers of the Women's Studies Section, will be joining us and I am hoping for a large turnout, so please mark your calendars! And in keeping with the Disney-fied surroundings of the conference, princess tiaras would not be amiss....

I am also happy to announce that the ACRL Board has approved our Action Plan for 2009 and will be providing us with \$1890 to support a panel at the 2009 NWSA conference on the Information Literacy Standards for Women's Studies that our Instruction Committee is currently working on. This will hopefully continue to lay the groundwork for a partnership between WSS and NWSA. The WSS Executive Committee at Midwinter approved the idea of nominating NWSA for the ACRL Liaison program which, if approved, would result in funding for one person to attend NWSA for a three year term in hopes of strengthening ties between the two organizations.

Our program this year, "Feminist Publishing: The Evolution of a Revolution," ties into our historical theme while still looking into the future for challenges and trends. We have chosen speakers representing a feminist press, feminist online news, a blogger, and some mainstream imprints that publish feminist works to get a broad view of the landscape of today's feminist publishing enterprise. What are the politics of the production and dissemination of information from a feminist perspective?

Make sure you're a part of this discussion Monday, June 30<sup>th</sup>, from 8:00 a.m. to noon.

*(continued on page 4)*

## WSS Programs at Annual

The ALA Annual Conference will be held in Anaheim, CA, this year between June 26 and July 2. While at the conference, don't forget to check out these three great programs. Each is sponsored or co-sponsored by WSS and each promises to be exciting and informative!

### **Feminist Publishing: The Evolution of a Revolution WSS (Main sponsor):**

Monday, June 30<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Awards Ceremony from 8:00-8:30)

From pamphlets and flyers to blogs and webzines, feminist publishing has always existed at the margins of scholarly communication, even as it simultaneously enters and influences the mainstream. In honor of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Women's Studies Section, we will explore the dynamic nature of feminist publishing with panelists representing feminist book, magazine, blog, and web publishing. Panelists include Florence Howe of the Feminist Press, Kristin Bender of WomensENews, Tedra Odsell of BitchPhd, Jennifer Nace, a WSS member and former feminist bookstore worker, Kimberly Guinta from Routledge, and Lisa Pierce from Greenwood.

### **Care Crisis on Libraries and Librarians**

#### **COSWL (Main sponsor):**

Sunday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 1:30-3:30

Many women are caught between their jobs and caring for children, grandchildren and aging parents. Because the library field is dominated by female employers this is an issue that affects employers and librarians personally. Come join a discussion on the "sandwich generation" and the possible solutions libraries can offer.

### **The Lady, the Tramp, and the Lion King: Mixed Messages about Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in Disney's Magic Kingdom**

#### **ANSS (Main sponsor):**

Sunday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

The program takes place in the midst of what is arguably the largest cultural enterprise in the world - Disney. Through an interdisciplinary panel of speakers, the program will explore the representation of race and gender in Disney media and will present an opportunity to think critically about, and perhaps challenge, preconceived notions about Disney and its effect on popular culture. This program is cosponsored by WSS and AFAS.

### **From the Editor**

Stacy Russo's term as Newsletter Editor ends following ALA Annual 2008. Julie Biando Edwards, Assistant Newsletter Editor, will move into the Editor's chair. Newsletter Editors serve two-year terms: year one as Assistant Newsletter Editor and year two as Editor. Newsletter positions are official ALA appointments.

### **Newsletter Editor Opening**

*WSS Newsletter* Editor needed for two year term, beginning with the Fall 2008 issue.

*Responsibilities:* Serve staggered two-year term, the first year as Assistant Editor, the second year as Editor. Editors are non-voting ex-officio members of the Executive Committee and of the Publications Committee. Editors may divide up the editorial and text inputting tasks as is most convenient for them. Camera-ready copy is sent to ACRL for production and mailing. Editors solicit input and news from WSS Officers, committee chairs and members, and may write original copy. At least one editor should be at WSS Executive, Publications, and Program Committee meetings; Membership meetings; and Leadership Orientations. Editors also must attend the ACRL meetings for newsletter editors.

*Qualifications:* Knowledge of or willingness to learn Microsoft Publisher; interest in increasing one's knowledge of how WSS operates; desire to add a national service accomplishment to one's CV. Enjoys working with an active group of dedicated librarians.

To apply, please send a brief e-mail regarding your interest to Stacy Russo (russo@chapman.edu) and Julie Biando Edwards (julie.edwards@umontana.edu). Applicants are encouraged to attach a copy of a current CV.

*(Continued from page 1)*

### **Midwinter Discussion**

Such issues of branding and student recognition have prompted several librarians to move to commercial products such as LibGuides, which allows librarians to create tabbed pages within a subject guide. Such products can be convenient for some institutions because all guides look essentially the same, are easy to navigate, and provide simple ways for librarians at the same institution to import and export pages from one guide into another. However, unlike wikis, such products may prove to be prohibitively expensive for libraries.

While the vast majority of librarians use some electronic form of subject guide creation, several participants continue to provide paper copies of guides at the reference desk or in some kind of abbreviated form as class handouts. There is still a need, some argued, for paper handouts that students can take away from a library instruction session to use later. Librarians did draw a distinction between the guides that they give students in classes, which tend to be very course specific, and the guides available on the library website and further differentiated the “quick guides” given out at the reference desk as opposed to those provided online for faculty and graduate students. There is, many agreed, a place for both.

Equally interesting was the focus on what types of materials are suitable for inclusion on subject guides, regardless of their format or distribution. While many still include print resources on their guides, and make a point of highlighting those resources while teaching, others include only databases, high quality and reputable websites, and other electronic sources. And, while some librarians organize their guides according to the format of the resource (Database, Reference Books, Websites), several organize their guides based on the content of the resource so that, for example, any abstract, whether it is electronic or in print, is included under “Abstracts” in the guide. It was this kind of practical information sharing – which further

included discussions on whether or not to annotate resources on guides (yes, but keep it brief), whether or not to include subject guides in the library catalog (a good idea if you have the time and the help), and whether or not a guide on something like “Climate Change” is the same as a guide on “Philosophy” or “Physics” (no one seems to know yet) – that made this discussion especially interesting and useful for participants.

In addition to these practical aspects of subject guide creation and organization, the larger questions of why we continue to create subject guides and whether or not they are used sparked a lively discussion. The majority of attendees seemed to agree that, while students and faculty may not use the guides in the ways in which we would hope or intend, they are extremely useful – even essential – for librarians at the reference desk. The ability of librarians to quickly and easily access information outside of their own subject areas proves to be enough reason to continue to create subject guides. While there seems to be a push for usability assessments of electronic subject guides (and while this is becoming easier thanks to software that counts statistics), there is general agreement that the subject guide, whatever its format, will not disappear any time soon.

*Julie Biando Edwards, University of Montana*

*(Continued from page 2)*

### **Notes from the Chair**

I want to welcome our new members and encourage you to get involved in any way you wish. Our committees are bursting with projects and we love to harness new energy! I would also like to encourage everyone to consider submitting a proposal to do a poster presentation during the Membership Forum at Annual. This is a new initiative designed to encourage research among our members and foster a communal dialogue on issues that are of interest to all of us.

See you all in Anaheim (with or without your princess tiaras)!

*Jennifer Gilley, Chair, Women's Studies Section*

## WSS Midwinter Social a Huge Success!

Of all of the social offerings at this year's ALA Midwinter meeting, the most intimate and sensational was a combined effort between ACRL's Women's Studies Section and SRRT's Feminist Task Force, a gathering held at the historic gay and lesbian bookstore, Giovanni's Room, in Philadelphia's Center City. While guests browsed the packed shelves and feasted on wine and cheese, one of the bookstore's founders, Ed Hermance, held court in the upper loft. He gifted us with the rich history of the bookstore and gave us a lesson in adapting to social change. As we enjoyed conversations with those we saw either often or once or twice a year, he reminded us of the importance of visibility, kissability (the Web site boasts direct lineage to Walt Whitman) and a positive outlook. At the end of the evening, many walked out with a complimentary copy of Susan Faludi's new book, *The Terror Dream: Fear and Fantasy in Post-9/11 America*, thanks to Henry Holt Publishers. A fantastic time was had by all, with pictures to prove it!

*Jennifer Nace  
Penn State Worthington Scranton*



*Rapt attendees at the WSS and Feminist Task Force Social at Midwinter.*

### Member News and Updates:

Sue Searing and Cindy Ingold are guest editors for an issue of *Library Trends* (vol. 56, no. 2, Fall 2007) devoted to "Gender Issues in Information Needs and Services." Several articles in this issue are authored by active members of WSS. This issue includes articles by: Cindy Ingold; Susan E. Searing; Kay Ann Cassell and Kathleen Weibel; Dolores Fidishun; Melody M. Allison; Karen M. Mason and Tanya Zanish-Belcher; Eliza T. Dresang, Melissa Gross, and Leslie Holt; Denise E. Agosto, Kimberly L. Paone, and Gretchen S. Ipock; Suzanne M. Stauffer; Ellen Broidy; Hope A. Olson; and Bharat Mehra and Donna Braquet.

\*\*\*\*\*

Diane M. Duesterhoeft, Reference and Instruction Librarian at the Louis J. Blume Library of St. Mary's University (San Antonio, TX), will be promoted to the rank of Full Professor, effective June 1, 2008.

\*\*\*\*\*

Stacy Shotsberger Russo recently had her first book published by McFarland & Company. *The Library as Place in California* "explores the sense of space and unique atmosphere" of thirty-two California libraries.

\*\*\*\*\*

*If you have announcements or news for the WSS newsletter please email Julie Biando Edwards at [julie.edwards@umontana.edu](mailto:julie.edwards@umontana.edu) for inclusion in the next newsletter.*

*Julie Biando Edwards  
University of Montana*

## Committee Reports From Midwinter in Philly

### Membership Committee

At our meeting at ALA Midwinter, the Membership Committee discussed launching a Facebook group for WSS in light of the success of our MySpace page. We have had several people spontaneously add us as a friend and our page administrator was able to send out a bulletin about the FTF/WSS social at Midwinter via our page. We decided to send out targeted communication to library school students who are members to emphasize that they do not have to be women's studies librarians in order to be members of our section.† The plans for the 25th anniversary social are progressing well, thanks to the generous support of Alexander Street Press and the Schlesinger Library!

*Piper Martin, Chair  
Wright State University*

### Collection Development & Bibliography Committee

The Collection Development and Bibliography Committee had a productive meeting in Philadelphia. The committee discussed developing and distributing a survey to assess the usage of the WSS Core Books lists. Carrie Kruse (WSS Core Books project co-editor) shared results from a survey developed and distributed in 2000 and 2001, and solicited ideas for updating the past survey. Collection Development and Bibliography Committee members will assist Carrie Kruse in distributing another survey (after the 2008 updates for Core Books have been completed). The committee also discussed the WSS Collection Development Resources site. New editors were recruited for specific pages, such as Collection Development Policies and Collection Development in Women's Studies: A Bibliography.

*Sharon Ladenson, Chair  
Michigan State University*

### Instruction Committee

At ALA Midwinter, the WSS Instruction Committee had a lively and energetic discussion meeting Sunday Morning at the Sofitel Hotel in Philadelphia. The committee discussed ACRL standards and how they relate to Women's Studies Instruction. The Instruction Committee is generating a Literature Review of Information Literacy standards. The WSS Instruction Committee would like presence at the 2009 National Women's Studies Association Conference. We discussed the possibility of creating virtual participation for the committee meetings at the annual conference in Anaheim 2008. The committee also discussed the prospect of submitting a proposal for a Round Table Discussion, Presentation, Session or Poster Session at the 2009 ACRL Conference in Seattle, WA. We are looking forward to the annual meeting in Anaheim!

*Chimene Tucker, Chair  
University of California, Santa Barbara*

**Awards Committee**, closed deliberations

**Electronic Resources and Access Committee**, no report submitted

**Nominating Committee**, no report submitted

**Program Planning Committee**, no report submitted

**Publications Committee**, no report submitted

**Research Committee**, no report submitted

### Job Announcement University of Michigan Women's Studies Librarian

Review of applications will begin on May 9, 2008, and continue until the position is filled. Information about the position is available at: [www.lib.umich.edu/hr/employment/women.html](http://www.lib.umich.edu/hr/employment/women.html)

## WSS Member Profiles



**Megan Adams Brooks, Director, Research & Instruction, Wellesley College Information Services**

**Education:** BA, College of St. Benedict; MLS, Syracuse University

**What Do You Do in Your Current Job?** I'm responsible for the staff in reference and instruction in the main and science libraries, Special Collections, the Book Arts program, and the faculty/staff computing help desk. I work at the reference desk, am a liaison to Cinema & Media Studies, co-teach an information/digital literacy class, and am the campus End-Note and Zotero guru.

**What Books Have You Read Lately?** *The Short Bus: A Journey Beyond Normal* by Jonathan Mooney, *Good Omens: The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch* by Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett; *Listening Is an Act of Love: A Celebration of American Life from the StoryCorps Project*, edited by Dave Isay; and *Petropolis* by Anya Ulinich.

**What Do You Enjoy Doing in Your Spare Time?** Anyone who has met me in the past two years knows that I'm a recent convert to the religion of ice hockey. While I grew up in Minnesota, land of hockey, I didn't start playing until 2005, and now I can't get enough. I blog about it extensively at librarygrrrl.net and am always interested in helping more women learn how to get involved! Sometimes I knit too.

**Why Did You Join WSS?** I joined WSS when I was a brand-new librarian. A colleague at LSU, Rachel Murphree, was then-co-editor of the Core Books project and asked me to participate. I agreed, joined the section, and the rest is history!

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**Susan Strickland, Reference Librarian & Instruction Coordinator, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas**

**Education:** BA Psychology/Sociology, Texas A&M University; MLS, Texas Woman's University

**What Do You Do in Your Current Job?** I am the bibliographer for sociology and criminal justice. My duties include general reference desk duty, bibliographic instruction, and collection development.

**What Books Have You Read Lately?** I just started *Train Your Mind, Change Your Brain* by Sharon Begley with a forward by the Dalai Lama. The book explains recent findings in neuroplasticity and the ability of the human brain to transform itself.

**What Do You Enjoy Doing in Your Spare Time?** I just bought a house, so I am doing a lot of arranging and decorating. With the onset of spring, I have started gardening.

**Why Did You Join WSS?** I joined WSS to learn how other librarians are successful in interdisciplinary fields. I also joined to meet new people.

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**Pamela Mann, Librarian for US Latino Studies and the Caribbean, The University of Texas Libraries**

**Education:** BA English, Northwestern; two years of coursework toward MA Latin American Studies, University of Arizona; MLS, University of South Carolina

**What Do You Do in Your Current Job?** Reference, instruction, and collection development. I also do outreach, programming (planning exhibits, seminars, and author readings), and I am the library liaison to the Center for Mexican American Studies.

**What Books Have You Read Lately?** *An Arsonist Guide to Writers' Homes in New England* by Brock Clarke; *The Golden Compass*, book one of Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy; *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers* by Xiaolu Guo; and *Shooting Gallery: An Art Lover's Mystery* by Hailey Lind (currently reading).

**What Do You Enjoy Doing in Your Spare Time?** Reading, writing, traveling, writing about traveling, watching TV or DVDs, cooking, baking, and making jewelry. It looks like I may be selling some earrings this year; my hobby is now a business.

**Why Did You Join WSS?** I've been a feminist since I was an undergraduate, so I signed up for WSS when I first became a member of ACRL. I became active in the section when I started working at the Women & Gender Studies library at Yale. I've stuck with WSS because we are a great group of people.

## Welcome New Members!

Jennifer Aninger  
Alana Kumbier  
Teresa Rodak  
Susan Klein  
Linda Rima  
Honor Moody  
Evelyn Day  
Erica Charis  
Brandie Marie Martin  
Yadira Payne  
Michele Castleman  
Suzanne Gray  
Sharon Jarvis  
Anne Morrow  
Cory Lampert  
Kathryn Shaughnessy  
Catherine Kosturski  
Gloria Benjamin  
Rosalind Fielder  
Amanda Williams  
onna Canevari de Paredes  
Lawan Orser  
Lilith Kunkel  
Deborah Creamer  
Susan Wortman  
Glynn Edwards

Susan Wortman  
Robin Brown  
Eunnie Imm - Stroukoff  
Shelley Nituama  
Judith Hilker  
Patricia Feeney  
Jennifer Rubin Dixey  
Liorah Golomb  
Taneya Gethers  
Sara Finch  
Danelle Moon  
Amanda Maddock  
Jennifer Phipps  
Rebecca Lossin  
Marc Selvaggio  
Christina Khema  
Santine Thach  
Rhonda Chadwick  
Heidi Abbey  
Samanthi Hewakapuge  
Gabrielle Toth  
Chimene Tucker  
Irene Yelovich  
Janelle Hubble  
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