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Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship

(COSWL) 

Midwinter Meeting Notes

January 10, 2004 (Saturday)

Present: Inga Boudreau; Linda Pierce; Marie Richardson; Stacy Voeller; Angela Gooden; Myra Michele Brown **Guests:** Sandy River, chair of ACRL Women's Studies § and Sharyn Ladner, doctoral student

After brief introductions, there was a discussion of the session "Breaking the Glass Ceiling," sponsored by COSWL at ALA annual conference in Toronto, 2003. We then discussed our current meeting days/times, 8am on Saturday and Tuesday. It was agreed that COSWL's Tuesday time slot is not good for anyone. The Saturday meeting day is fine. There was discussion of having one COSWL meeting instead of two, on Saturday, for ninety minutes. We agreed to check with Lorelle Swader, COSWL's ALA liaison, about meeting time slot availability.

The COSWL bibliography was discussed. Sandy River gave us a nice overview of how the bibliography had been done in recent years. The consensus was this bibliography is valuable but might work better online. We agreed to do research on

- how the work was divided amongst the bibliography's editors
- what did the paper version make in terms of sales
- can we use ALA's Darlena Davis to work on any bibliography webpage
- create a task force to develop the online bibliography idea
- rather than update every five years, the online version could be updated annually

We then discussed some of the audience comments from COSWL's 2002 session at ALA's annual conference in Atlanta. One comment in particular asking women "not to negotiate, so that those who are uncomfortable or afraid to negotiate are not at such an disadvantage." We talked about women still seeing themselves in positions of weakness rather than of strength. Inga Boudreau suggested we need to teach women how to present their skills in a way that administrators value? What values get everyone's attention? How to get administrators to buy into your programs/ideas? It was suggested we could contact someone on the Better Salaries/Pay Equity Task Force about our discussion, since this fits in with the campaign to raise professional and paraprofessional salaries. Sharyn Ladner wondered about the lack of data about gender stratification in librarianship. The issues identified during this discussion were:

- empowerment

- girls still not being taught to ask/demand money
- the feminine propensity to “go along with other”
- looking at the sociological and psychological underpinnings of these behaviors
- impassioned discussion about valuing self, about each of us valuing our own work/contributions to our libraries
- issues related to pregnancy and motherhood

We ended the meeting talking about the problems created when we think defensively or reactively. That we would like to do an article, a video or build a website which helps people, especially women, look at things another way; a tool to teach women to think differently.

We adjourned at 9:16am.

Meeting Notes

January 13, 2004 (Tuesday)

Present: Lorelle Swader; Daisy Waters; Angela Gooden; Mary Biblio; Linda Pierce; Myra Michele Brown

Guests: Michael Gorman and associates (2); Theresa Tobin, chair of SSRT's Feminist Task Force and Deirdre ?, ALA Council

Michael Gorman is running for ALA president. He spoke very briefly to the group at the beginning of our meeting. Our initial discussion centered on the day(s) and time(s) of COSWL's meetings at annual conference. Due to various commitments, the compromise meeting days and times for Orlando are:

8-9am on Saturday (unchanged)

4-5pm on Sunday (new time, to replace the 8am Tuesday time slot)

We discussed COSWL's next program. It was agreed we could not prepare a program for annual conference 2004 in Orlando. However everyone wanted to do another program, e.g., “Nice Girls Don't Get Paid II.” Lorelle Swader mentioned that honoraria is the big issue for ALA. It was suggested that we invite Oprah Winfrey to speak at the 2005 COSWL program on empowerment of women. Oprah Winfrey is the prototype for the empowered, strong, successful woman who made it in a tough medium by being true to herself and by not subscribing to the “rules.” She was not invested in “being a good girl” or “doing that girl thing.” Myra Brown agreed to write a draft letter to Ms Winfrey, which will be shared with the entire committee for feedback before a letter is sent to Harpo Productions.

Mary Biblio encourage all COSWL members to run for ALA Council. Lorelle knows the editor of e.worklife newsletter, which is published by the new Allied Professional Assoc. There is a place for women's issues in this publication.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05am

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