

Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship

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Meeting Notes

ALA Annual Conference 2007 in Washington, DC

COSWL Meeting #1

Date: Sunday, 6/24/2007

Time: 1:30 PM-3:30 PM

Attendees:

COSWL members

Shinjoung Yeo
Darlena Davis
Lorelle Swader
Melody Allison
Barbara Pickell
John A. Moorman
Lauren Pressely

Guests

Dena Marger
Stacey Devin
Lore Guilmartin

Introductions, and COSWL as a committee

- Announcements:

Anita Schiller, past member, was honored with ALA honorary lifetime membership for her work for women's issues, salary equity etc.

- COSWL Booth at exhibition hall (745)

This is the first year that COSWL had a booth; it was found to be a very effective way to publicize our committee. We asked people who visited our table about their concerns on women's issues and found that few people were able to articulate the issues. This indicates that COSWL needs to take a leadership role to educate our community on women's issues.

COSWL provided informal technology workshops at the booth. This informal workshop is a great venue for women who are still novices to many technologies and in general have little connection to tech. community. The workshop can foster understanding of how technologies are placed within our culture. COSWL will continue to have a booth and will propose co-tabling with WSS and FTF.

New COSWL Wiki was set up (coswl.pbwiki.com) and used for the workshop at the booth.

The Wiki will be a workspace for projects.

- Program plan for 2008 Annual ALA: Anaheim Conference

The Annual program will be about care crisis to address the fact that women are still the primary caretakers and raise the social and political visibility on this issue. Ruth Rosen's article "The Care Crisis" in *The Nation* resonated with the committee members as a topic very relevant to librarians and worth exploring in a program on the topic.

Barbara, Melody & Shinjoung will work together; ShinJoung will contact Ruth Rosen for a keynote speaker. (Note: Please also see the item "2008 midwinter Resolutions" below).

- Resolution: (2008 midwinter)

John will review our work and write a resolution on childcare at work

- Research Projects with FTF (male domination in ALA panels)

FTF will take lead but it hasn't started yet.

- Other possible COSWL projects:

Lauren will develop a place to put links for basic introduction to technology. This will be particularly relevant for women who are going back to the workforce. Also COSWL will create resources on various women's issues such as family issues, sexual harassment, etc.

- ALA website: There will be a big ALA redesign that will impact COSWL's page. This is a great opportunity to rethink COSWL website.
- Digitization of COSWL Documents: Stacey Devine will work with Lorelle to obtain documents to scan and will catalog them

COSWL Meeting #2

Date: Tuesday, 6/26/2007

Time: 8:00 AM-10:00 AM

COSWL Members

Shinjoung Yeo
Melody Allison
John A. Moorman
Barbara Pickell
Lauren Pressely
Lorelle Swader

Guests

Theresa Tobin (from FTF)
Lore Guilmartin

- Announcements:

There are 20 "glass ceiling" pins that could be sold or raffled off next midwinter or annual.

- Anaheim program:

Theresa Tobin said that FTF might be interested in co-sponsoring the program. In addition to the keynote speaker, Ruth Rosen, we will post a call for speakers on blog and invite speakers from organizations in L.A. who are working on this issue. The program time will be June 28th at 1:30 on Sunday.

- Continuation of COSWL Booth:

Everyone agreed that it was a good experience. In terms of budget, Lorelle mentioned that it might be difficult to have COSWL booth as well as a program. However, if FTF and WSS are able to share the cost this might be possible.

A discussion followed about outside vendors as financial contributors to our booth for posters, PR items, etc. This seems to be a possibility for exploration, particularly if expenses for our program eat up our budget.

However, this needs to be done with caution and a clear understanding by the vendor that this would not be a platform for advertising.

Shinjoung mentioned that Tech Soup, a non-profit organization, is interested in sponsoring booth (b/c of workshop) since we are providing tech workshops at the booth. Tech Soup supports rural libraries on technology. ShinJoung will follow up on this to check what types of sponsorship are possible for a council committee and detailed logistics.

Collect business cards in the booth for raffle. This list can be used for email list to publicize our programs as well as various announcements for programs that relate to women's issues.

Reports:

ShinJoung will work with Lorelle to report to council on COSWL activities. Regular reports will show the council what we do

- Research project:

Theresa Tobin from FTF gave an update on the project which is looking into gender representation on ALA panels. Dolores Fidishun from FTF will lead the research. After this annual, Dolores will be following up with people who are interested in participating.

- ALA Publications:

Melody described the discrepancies in representation between men and women in the 2006 ALA PR publication Library. There were a number of sexist images in this publication. Compared to males, females are often portrayed more softly and stereotyped. Pictures of men (even very young ones) tended to be closer to the person, to have the person directly engaging the camera, thus providing the image impression of a strong, straightforward, person of authority. Pictures of women tend to have the person not looking straight on into the camera, but in the act of 'caring,' 'nurturing' others and/or not in a position of strength or authority. Additionally, these pictures of men tended to be larger, some taking more than one page while ones with women tended to be smaller. This publication was passed around. Lorelle informed the group that this publication was prepared by an outside PR firm and advised that this would be a place to begin a dialogue of change. Melody pointed out that indeed this may be an important way to enlighten those beyond ALA since this reflects a general interpretation of the representation of women. Image relates to impressions of women on the subliminal level if not conscious level, and may relate to, or reflect, the lack of recognition of women's

expertise as administrators, technologists, and other areas of importance. First impressions are important, and many times images in publications are giving the first impression about the people reflected in them.

COSWL Action items:

Step 1: Contact public information office and asked to be aware of this issue and take an action

Step 2: If response not appropriate then write a letter to American Libraries and address this issue

Step 3: Include this discussion in our council report (keeps it on the record, and lets them know we're watch dogs)

Step 4: Propose a resolution to council about representation of women in publications

(Note: Please see also next item "Midwinter Resolutions")

- Midwinter Resolutions:

John will draft resolutions on Care Crisis & Image issues for us to discuss at Midwinter

- Creating a database for potential speaker information.

We can utilize our wiki but Lorelle pointed out that Leslie Burger's library core project is doing a similar function.

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