



ACRL WOMEN'S STUDIES NEWSLETTER

Vol. 6, No. 2
December 1991

Bonnie Jean Cox, Editor
Wendy Thomas, Asst. Editor

WOMEN'S STUDIES SECTION VOTES AGAINST PROGRAM AT ACRL IN SALT LAKE CITY

At the section's General Membership meeting, a resolution was passed stating that the section would not present a program at the 1992 ACRL National Conference at Salt Lake City. In the resolution, the full text of which appears on page 7 of this newsletter, section members stated that the resolution was taken "in support of the national boycott of tourism in Utah resulting from that state's repressive abortion laws".

The resolution does not prohibit individual section members from attending ACRL 1992, but does encourage them to "take into consideration the issues of reproductive freedom and freedom of information" when they make their decisions. It was also resolved to publicize our decision in Cognotes, the conference newsletter and to communicate its decision to the ACRL board.

Although an extensive and lively discussion preceded the passage of this resolution, it was passed by a large majority. The membership's sentiment was probably best summarized in a separate note that chair-elect Virginia Daley (Duke University) sent to ACRL: "How ironic that you would choose to have a conference focusing on excellence in a state that could win excellence awards for the suppression of information as well as the suppression of the rights of women, blacks, gays, and lesbians -- in essence, a good portion of the ACRL membership."

Past chair Patricia Kreitz presented the final text of our resolution and summarized our discussion and concerns at the ACRL Board Meeting. Although the Board regretted that we were not coming to Utah with a program that addressed the issues we were raising, Pat reports that they took our concerns very seriously and respected them. They offered financial support should we choose to mail the resolution separately to the section membership rather than include it in this newsletter. They also are responding to this and other social concerns by establishing a Task Force on how ACRL should respond to social issues. Carol Rudisell (University of Delaware) and Nancy Luikart (Texas Tech) are members of this task force from the Women's Studies Section.

"WOMEN'S STUDIES AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY: TRANSFORMING COMPETITION INTO COALITION"

Keynote speaker Dr. Beverly Guy-Sheftall and three front-line information professionals told a packed room at the WSS program on Monday July 1 that Ethnic Studies, Black Studies and Women's Studies represent three challenges to the academy's view of itself as universal and value-free. Addressing the subject from their ethnic and professional perspectives, the speakers defined response to this challenge as the academic problem of the '90's.

Dr. Guy-Sheftall, director of the Women's Research and Resource Center at Spelman College, pointed out our

responsibility to demand the demise of the white, male Eurocentric model of curriculum and pedagogy. She remarked that the growth of WS programs in the 70's and even the curriculum transformation projects of the

80's were often questioned by women of color because of their neglect of questions of class and ethnic identity. We are now in Phase III of Women's Studies, a new wave that is reinvigorating the discipline as women of color and some white women scholars begin explicitly to address questions of race, class and gender. This is a critical time in the development of Women's Studies; these new programs and interests raise problems, but dealing with them can be the most intellectually stimulating work in the academy.

Some of the problems Dr. Guy-Sheftall outlined included the difficulty of language. She pointed out that the phrase "women of color" obscures the differences between ethnic lines and makes a dichotomy between "white" and "other". The new approaches also bring up the difficult dialogue about which category of oppression is more pervasive and about feminism among "women of color." All of these difficulties will, inevitably, also lead to difficult dialogues within the classroom.

The strategies which she suggested for dealing with these challenges include first, the recognition that there is no "quick fix," that incorporating new scholarship and points of view will be a slow and complex process. We need to see diversity as a resource, not a stumbling block; to recognize that we need each other's points of view and to learn to listen more to each other.

We need to attend each other's conferences and read each others' work. It is now time to re-examine the Women's Studies canon and open it up to texts in ethnic studies even if they don't focus specifically on gender.

Dr. Guy-Sheftall concluded by urging the audience not to be afraid to make mistakes, but to forge ahead. "It is imperative," she concluded, "that our students don't leave with these gaps in their education."

Library respondents to Dr. Guy Sheftall's talk were Janice Beaudin, multicultural outreach coordinator for the University of Wisconsin College Library, a Native American; Leta Hendricks, minority librarian intern at Ohio State University, an African American; and Amy Seetoo, from Research Information Services, University Microfilms International, an Asian American. All the respondents stressed the need for libraries to reflect the cultural diversity of the world and for librarians to improve their multicultural literacy. Cultural education and sensitivity should be the responsibility of all librarians, not just the "minority librarian."

In concluding, the moderator, Susan Perry, directed,

Departmental Systems Group, Stanford University Data Center, pointed out that within the University Women's Studies and Ethnic Studies librarians are change agents. They can help the library build new relations with faculty and students.

OPEN DISCUSSION SESSION AT MIDWINTER

As a follow-up to issues raised at the Section's annual program and business meeting, we would like to continue the discussion on "How Should the Women's Studies Section Respond to Social Issues?" The discussion at the annual general business meeting on this topic was invaluable in helping the section decide on how to respond to the ACRL conference move to Salt Lake City. However, the discussion raised as many questions as it answered. Central to the discussion and still very much unresolved are "can/should we separate the personal from the professional from the political in section activities?" and "to what extent do we allow our personal politics to impact on our professional activities?"

At the Midwinter discussion session on Sunday, January 26, from 9:30-11 a.m., we would like to probe further these questions, particularly in relation to the following activities which will face the Section during the coming years:

1) **ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans:** Given the repressive information/rights laws relating to women in Louisiana and given the decisions we have made regarding the conferences in Salt Lake City and San Francisco, how should we approach the 1993 annual conference in New Orleans?

2) **Recruitment and retention of ethnic women:** Originally we had planned for the Midwinter discussion to focus on this topic as a direct follow-up to the program on "Women's Studies and Ethnic Diversity" presented at Annual. We had initially thought the discussion would pertain to recruitment of ethnic women in the profession, but perhaps now we should talk about recruitment and involvement of ethnic women in the Women's Studies Section.

3) **ACRL Task Force on Social Issues:** I hope our discussion will provide some guidance for our two section members, Carol Rudisell and Nancy Luikart, who have been appointed to the ACRL Task Force.

As you can see, these issues are interrelated, the connective tissue being how we, as a section of

individual librarians, collectively respond to social issues. We do not anticipate that actual section policy will be debated at this meeting, although undoubtedly the discussion will provide a valuable basis for future section actions. We would like the meeting to be simply a discussion session and would appreciate any suggestions you might have as to how we might address these or related issues. Get in touch with Jacqueline Marie or Ginny Daley with suggestions and please come to the meeting full of opinions!

**Ginny Daley,
Chair-Elect**

WSS SOCIAL HOUR IN SAN ANTONIO

The Women's Studies Section is sponsoring its traditional social hour at the ALA Mid-Winter meeting in San Antonio to welcome new and prospective members, seasoned veterans, and anyone interested in Women's Studies and related ALA activities. Membership in the Section is not necessary nor do you need to make reservations. The social hour provides opportunities for all of us to get acquainted with each other, share ideas of mutual interest, and learn more about the Section. Bring an interested friend and join us to share conversations on common concerns about women's studies activities and to take time to relax before the conference.

The social hour will be held on Friday, January 24, 1992, from 5-7 p.m. in the Riverbend Saloon of the Hyatt Regency Hotel. The room is located along the riverwalk. A buffet and specials are provided. If you like kicking up your heels a bit, feel free to wear your dancing shoes. This will be a no-host bar event. Members of the WSS Communications and Executive committees will be on hand to serve as greeters. Look for the group with name tags.

**Nancy M. Stanley
Communications Committee**

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

A warm thanks to Patricia Kreitz, outgoing WSS chair. Pat's organizational and public relations skills, plus her unflappable manner have steered us through an eventful and productive year. Additionally, she and our outgoing past chair, Sarah Pritchard, have been full of good advice for me to cope with an ever-increasing and dynamic Women's Studies Section. The committees continue to

be hardworking and innovative; they contribute greatly to the high visibility of the section. Thanks to all for a smashing year; I look forward to working with such creative and knowledgeable women this year.

Mid-Winter

I have gained a great deal from my association with the section, not only in terms of professional knowledge, but also personal contacts from a diverse group of women across the United States. I am especially interested in continuing to diversify our group culturally, ethnically and internationally. I hope we can discuss ways this can be done at our Midwinter discussion group meeting and perhaps even come up with a written plan.

Everyone is invited to attend this discussion from 9:30-11 a.m. on Sunday, January 26 (see conference program for location). It will focus on broad social issues affecting the section and women's issues in general. The impetus is our recent decision not to hold a program at ACRL in Salt Lake City. (See our letter with resolution elsewhere in this newsletter. This was given to the ACRL Board and also to Pat Schuman, ALA President.)

Midwinter is also your chance to attend any of the Section meetings, our informal social, get-acquainted hour, and our orientation meeting. Please see the schedule on the last page of the newsletter.

Note also the Women's Studies Conspectus meeting from 8-10 p.m. on Sunday, January 26. Sue Searing will chair this meeting to discuss librarians' use of the conspectus.

Committee Activities

All the committees need hard-working and creative librarians. Appointments for the 1992-93 year will be made by vice-chair Virginia Daley. If you are interested in any committee, including the 1993 program committee (always in need of energy), let Ginny know, or call me or any committee chair for further information.

The Publications Committee has several interested publishers for our anthology of conference papers on issues in Women's Studies Librarianship. ACRL wishes to see a draft at Midwinter. The Technical services committee is concerned with the use of copy cataloguing, which often has only one (sometimes inappropriate) Library of Congress heading for items of interest to women. The committee is also meeting

together briefly with the Collection Development committee to see where their interests might overlap. The Collection Development and Bibliography Committee reviewed some collection development policies and bibliographies for the Center for Gender Studies in Moscow. They also discussed a potential conference-within-a-conference to address collection development in depth. The Communications Committee is planning a directory of WSS members with listings for their specialties and skills. The Ad-Hoc Committee on the MLA Bibliography had a productive first meeting at Annual and hopes to have a report ready at Midwinter.

We are all very excited about the upcoming ALA 1992 program in San Francisco, "Controlling Women's Right to Know: Information Suppression in the Information Age." Both ALA President Pat Schuman and ACRL Chair Ann Beaubien have expressed interest in this program. A short article I wrote about our June 1991 program, as well as our concerns with the ACRL conference being held in Salt Lake City (with pithy quotes!), and our upcoming ALA 1992 program was published in College & Research Libraries News, September 1991, Vol. 52, No. 8.

The revision to our Bylaws was passed and we now have two members-at-large. Sue Gibson was elected for two years and Nancy Luikart was appointed by the Executive Committee for one year. Welcome to all the new Section officers, chairs of committees and committee members. I look forward to working with all of you. If anyone wishes to get in touch with me with future plans for the section or any other comments or criticisms, please mail, call, fax or e-mail: Jacquelyn Marie, McHenry Library, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA 95064; 408/459-3255; FAX 408/459-8206; E-mail JAM@UCSCM.

**Jacquelyn Marie,
Chair**

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PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

Women, Race, and Ethnicity is a substantial new annotated bibliography of print and audiovisual materials published by the Women's Studies Librarian of the University of Wisconsin System. Fully indexed by subject, the listing includes more than 2,400 citations to books, articles, special issues of periodicals, and nonprint items. References are classified under 28 disciplines and topics, with the following sub-sections: Asian and Pacific American women, Black women, Latinas, American Indian women, Jewish women and Euro-American women.

Meeting the needs of undergraduates and their teachers for materials on women of various racial and ethnic groups, the bibliography emphasizes recent materials on women in the United States. A special effort was made to cite materials on ethnic groups under-represented in the mainstream literature. This edition supersedes the 1988 preliminary version. The cost is \$7 prepaid. Checks should be made payable to "University of Wisconsin-Madison." For further information, get in touch with the Women's Studies Librarian, 430 Memorial Library, 728 State Street, Madison, WI 53706, (608)263-5754

Minority American Women: A Research Guide, is now available as Occasional Publication #10 from the Southwest Institute for Research on Women. The guide, prepared by WSS section member RUTH DICKSTEIN and Maria Segura Hoopes, gives diverse sources of information on minority women, emphasizing Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, and urban African Americans. Copies can be purchased from Women's Studies/SIROW, 102 Douglass Bldg., University of Arizona, Tucson AZ 85721. Cost is \$6;

checks should be made payable to the University of Arizona.

Working Papers on Language, Gender and Sexism is a publication of the AILA Scientific Commission on Language and Gender for researchers working in language and gender. The working papers were established in response to the increased attention given to the issues of gender and sexism in the study of language. WPLGS will enable researchers in all disciplines working in these areas to establish contact and create a network for the exchange of ideas and opinions relevant to the issues in language and gender study.

The first four issues are thematically linked volumes of selected papers from the Feminist Linguistics Symposium at the International congress of Applied Linguistics held in Greece in 1990. Subscriptions are \$A20 for individuals and \$A30 for institutions. Payment in Australian dollars should be sent to Working Papers on Language, Gender and Sexism, c/o Joanne Winter, Department of Linguistics, Monash University, CLAYTON VIC 3168 Australia.

The San Francisco Bay Area Gay and Lesbian Serials Microfilm Collection, a joint project of the University of California, Berkeley, and the Gay and Lesbian Historical Society of Northern California is now available for loan or purchase. This unique and historically significant collection represents all of the major gay and lesbian publications produced in Northern California over the past 40 years. An additional compilation of rare surviving newsletters, newspapers and magazines that document the early years of Gay Liberation in the Bay Area was also selected for inclusion.

A printed guide to the collection may be purchased for \$15 (prepaid, with check made payable to the "UC Regents") and ordered from Andrea Spurgeon, Librarian's Office, Main Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720; telephone (510) 642-3773. For loan or purchase of the microform copies of the titles, write to: Interlibrary Lending Service, Photoduplication Section, at the same address as above; telephone (510) 642-1598.

WOMEN'S STUDIES AND LIBRARIANS ONLINE

There are now at least two new electronic bulletin boards or listserves nationally for people interested in Women's Studies and feminist librarianship. WMST-L

is a listserv directed more specifically at the interests of faculty and students involved in academic women's studies, while the focus of FEMINIST is more specifically aimed at women in librarianship. There is, however, much overlap of interest between the two groups.

If you have e-mail capabilities from your home or workplace, you can sign on at no cost to both listserves. The process is the same: at your send mail prompt on your system type in the message "Mail (address of listserv)". For WMST-L the address is `LISTSERV@UMDD.BITNET`; for FEMINIST the address is `LISTSERV@MITVMA.BITNET`. The message is `SUBSCRIBE (name of listserv) (your full name)`. For example: "SUBSCRIBE WMST-L Jane Doe."

WOMEN'S STUDIES IN ACTION

SUSAN SEARING has been on temporary leave of absence from her position as University of Wisconsin Women's Studies Librarian. She is serving as Acting Assistant Director for Public Services and Deputy Director of the General Library System, UW-Madison.

EDITOR'S NOTE

With this issue of the newsletter, we welcome Wendy Thomas as the new assistant editor. Wendy is the public service librarian at the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College.

Thanks to Betty Glass and Michael Corlee of the University of Nevada, Reno, for the computer graphics that provided our new logo in the masthead.

Bonnie Jean Cox,
Editor

The Association of College and Research Libraries Women's Studies Newsletter (ISSN 0895-691X) is a semi-annual publication of the Women's Studies Section of ACRL. It is a communications vehicle for section members and other interested individuals. Short articles on topics of interest to the membership will be reviewed for publication. Longer articles are welcome, but should be discussed with an editor in advance. Inquiries may be made to the editors: Bonnie Cox or Wendy Thomas c/o ALA/ACRL, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. The WSS Newsletter is published twice annually in June and December. Editorial deadlines for each issue are April 1 and October 1 of each year. This newsletter is available to all section members at no additional charge. Policy for purchase by non-section members is currently under review.

TEXT OF WSS RESOLUTION ON 1992 ACRL CONFERENCE

TO: ACRL Board of Directors
FROM: Pat Kreitz, Chair, Women's Studies Section
RE: Location of 1992 ACRL National Conference in Utah
DATE: July 2, 1992

On Sunday, June, 30, at the Women's Studies Section General Membership Meeting, the following resolution was passed regarding the Section's participation in the 1992 ACRL National Conference to be held in Salt Lake City, Utah.

RESOLVED:

That the Women's Studies Section, in support of the national boycott of tourism in Utah resulting from that state's repressive abortion laws, cancel its plans to present a program at the 1992 ACRL National Conference in Salt Lake City; that we communicate our decision and our reasons to the ACRL Board and ALA membership; and that we encourage Women's Studies Section members to take the issues of reproductive freedom, and freedom of information into consideration in reaching individual decisions whether to attend the conference.

The abortion law in Utah represents only one component of the objection to the choice of Utah as a site. There is a much broader question of restriction of access to information that particularly affects the lives of women. In Utah, for example, there are severe restrictions on the ability to dispense information about reproductive alternatives and sex education. It was the unanimous decision of the Section membership that these practices violate the library Bill of Rights and therefore are of legitimate professional concern.

This was resolved after a very lengthy discussion of all aspects of the topic. We understand the difficulties faced by ACRL in finding alternate sites and support the decision not to go to Arizona. We also support ACRL's commitment to bring professional development to areas that would not otherwise have such opportunities. One of the alternatives considered was to participate in the conference with a program that would educate the ACRL membership, attending local librarians, and the citizens of the area about the library profession's commitment to freedom of access to information. However, the consensus of the Section membership is that Utah's practices so violate our professional commitment to intellectual freedom that we could not, in good conscience, participate as a Section

We strongly regret the limited vision of ACRL in its decision-making process. By focussing solely on abortion and defining it as a personal rather than a social issue, the Board ignored the fact that Utah's discriminatory and sexist reproductive rights practices are legally sanctioned. The laws as they currently stand particularly oppress poor and illiterate women. The Women's Studies Section opposes sexism and racism. It is unfortunate that the logic used in deciding to move the Conference site from Arizona was not consistently applied in selecting an alternative site.

ACRL WOMEN'S STUDIES SECTION MIDWINTER MEETING AGENDA

PLEASE NOTE THAT MEETING TIMES ARE TENTATIVE AS WE GO TO PRESS.
CHECK CONFERENCE PROGRAM FOR POSSIBLE LOCATION AND TIME CHANGES.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24

2:00-4:00 p.m.

Executive Committee

5:00-7:00 p.m.

Social Hour, Riverbend Saloon, Hyatt Regency

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25

9:30-10:30 a.m.

Collection Development Committee

9:30-10:30 a.m.

Technical Services Committee

9:30-11:00 a.m.

Publications Committee

10:30-11:00 a.m.

Joint meeting of Tech Services and Coll. Dev. Committee

2:00-4:00 p.m.

Communications Committee

4:30-5:30 p.m.

Open Orientation Meeting

SUNDAY, JANUARY 26

9:30-11:00 a.m.

General Discussion Meeting on Social Concerns

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Communications Committee

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Publications Committee

2:00-4:00 p.m.

Collection Development Committee

8:00-10:00 p.m.

Conspectus Discussion

MONDAY, JANUARY 27

8:00-9:00 a.m.

New Orleans 1993 Program Committee

9:30-11:00 a.m.

San Francisco 1992 Program Committee

2:00-4:00 p.m.

Publications Committee

2:00-4:00 p.m.

Technical Services Committee

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28

9:30-11:00 a.m.

Executive Committee

Bonnie Cox/Wendy Thomas, Editors
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