



ACRL WOMEN'S STUDIES NEWSLETTER

Vol. 7, No. 1
June, 1992

Bonnie Jean Cox, Editor
Wendy Thomas, Asst. Editor

“IS THE ‘POLITICAL CORRECTNESS’ BACKLASH CONTROLLING WOMEN’S RIGHT TO KNOW? INFORMATION SUPPRESSION IN THE INFORMATION AGE”

Concern about ACRL’s controversial selection of Utah as its 1992 conference site resulted in the development of the theme of the political correctness backlash and information suppression as the theme for the 1992 ACRL Women’s Studies Section program at the ALA Annual Conference in San Francisco. From the general membership meeting last June through the 1992 planning meetings at Midwinter in San Antonio, the program has truly become the product of the entire Section. The SRRT Feminist Task Force is providing its support as a co-sponsor of the program, which is scheduled for Monday, June 29, 1992, from 9:30 a.m. — 12:30 p.m. The location will be determined by ALA.

Various factors in our society result in the suppression of information of vital importance to women. The emerging trend for “political correctness” (PC) will be addressed in terms of its implications for ethnic and Women’ Studies.” Continuing legal attacks on reproductive rights will be analyzed within the context of government-imposed censorship for libraries.

Gloria T. Hull, Professor of Women’s Studies at the University of California at Santa Cruz, will be the keynote speaker. Among Ms. Hull’s well-known books on African-American women are All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women’s Studies and Color, Sex & Poetry: Three Women Writers of the Harlem Renaissance. Her most recent publication is Healing Heart: Poems, 1973-1988 (Latham, NY: Kitchen Table, Women of Color Press, 1989). Ms Hull will address the impact of the “PC” movement on the general academic climate and identify ways in which an individual’s ideas can be barred from publication and academic credibility. She will also provide commentary on the challenges facing academic women of color in the “PC” arena.

Christine Jenkins, currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Wisconsin - Madison School of Library and Information Studies and a former school librarian, has written extensively about intellectual freedom issues. The focus of her dissertation is the involvement of women in the intellectual freedom movement from 1940-1975. She is the author of “Feminism, pornography, and libraries,” which appears in Libraries, Erotica & Pornography (Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 1991). Ms Jenkins’ presentation will focus on national right-wing groups and their systematic efforts to control school boards, curricula, and textbooks via the “PC” bandwagon. Her comments should be of special interest to public and school librarians.

AN APOLOGY FROM THE EDITORS

The editors of the WSS newsletter would like to apologize for the layout problems and typographical errors in the article on the Atlanta program in the the last issue. Unfortunately, these mistakes made the report on Dr. Beverly Guy-Sheftall's program somewhat difficult to follow.

— **Bonnie Cox and Wendy Thomas**

Ellen Broidy, Coordinator of Library Publications and History and Film Studies Librarian at the University of California at Irvine, is also currently in a doctoral program. She has written articles on the unmet needs of women library workers and users, as well as issues facing reference librarians as teachers. Ms Broidy will discuss academic library "PC" concerns, including collection development, censorship via bibliographic access, and self-censoring in the classroom.

The current political arena has set a grim stage for libraries, as they face a variety of legal battles in the 1990's. Vigilance and involvement are necessary to protect hard-won intellectual freedom rights. Initiated in response to the repressive legal climate in Utah, the 1992 WSS program has grown to encompass the national implications of the "PC" movment and its insidious attempts to undermine women's access to information.

— **Betty Glass,**
Co-Chair, 1992 Annual Conference
Program Planning Committee

MIDWINTER DISCUSSION OF SOCIAL ISSUES

WSS members gathered at an open meeting in San Antonio to discuss social issues, The discussion focused on two issues in particular: the Section's decision not to present a program at the ACRL conference in Salt Lake City, and ACRL's choice

of Catharine Stimpson as the conference's keynote speaker.

By cancelling the Section's program in Salt Lake City, WSS intended to make a statement about suppression of information, as well as to show support for members who felt that they could not attend a conference in Utah because of the abortion issue. We did not intend to boycott ACRL, and stated that attendance at the conference should be a matter of individual choice.

Reaction to the choice of Catharine Stimpson as the keynote speaker was ambivalent and needs to be aired. A representative from ACRL came to the meeting to explain that the choice of Stimpson was not intended to co-opt the Section, but was an attempt to accommodate our concerns. She expressed Stimpson's desire to hear more from us and asked for something to take back to her. [Editor's note: Stimpson has read our statement and is aware of the Section's position.]

Following are some of the Section members' concerns and comments about these issues:

In this instance we are saying more with our absence than with our presence. On the other hand, sometimes we need to be present, to take a stand in person. It is important not to prejudge what action we take. Different situations call for different actions.

People say this is only a personal issue, but if an organization continues to act not in accordance with members' views, it becomes an organizational issue.

We are a profession with a social conscience and we should

Speak out. Conservatives are avidly speaking out and we have to learn to do this.

It might be a show of support for women in Utah to publicize Catharine Stimpson's presence at the conference. Can ACRL allow all information providers or people concerned with information repression to hear Stimpson's speech even if they are not registered for the conference?

Many section members feel that Stimpson's appearance at the conference will be an opportunity for a feminist position to be heard, and, because of who she is and her national reputation, it will get more attention. WSS would like Stimpson to say that she supports our statement and position, and to explain why she is speaking. We would like her to make the connection between women's studies and issues such as reproductive rights. We are concerned with both the suppression of information and freedom of choice.

— **Bernice Lacks,**
WSS Secretary

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

We had a very busy and productive Midwinter Conference with an excellent program on the Women's Studies conspectus, a very interesting discussion on social concerns, and many profitable committee meetings. Our summer program in San Francisco should be extremely worthwhile, as it speaks to freedom of information issues of great concern to librarians (see article on front page of this newsletter). I am very pleased to have as keynote speaker Gloria Hull, an African-American poet and Women's Studies professor from my campus, the University of California, Santa Cruz

Among librarians, there is an ongoing concern with social issues and how they relate to potential conference sites for ALA/ACRL meetings. Several Section members are writing up their notes and ideas on this issue for potential publication. If anyone else has comments, please send them to me as soon as possible while they are still fresh in your mind.

The Communications Committee, with help from others, will be putting on a major social hour at Annual with various women's and ethnic alternative and mainstream publishers. Anyone with suggestions or willing to help, please contact me. The Communications Committee is also working on a membership directory.

The Technical Services Committee is proposing a new charge, to be acted upon by the WSS Executive Committee at Annual. The Committee plans to monitor technical service issues impacting Women's Studies and to recommend and implement projects to meet needs in this area.

The Publications Committee is involved with the core lists in Women's Studies, an upcoming anthology of writings in Women's Studies librarianship, and a compilation of collection development policies for Women's Studies which will include the supplemental guidelines for the Women's Studies conspectus. (See related article on WSS publications in this newsletter.)

The Collection Development Committee is interested in questions of electronic formats and getting information out on the indexing project.

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 communication 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 Street, Chicago, IL 60611. The WSS Newsletter is published twice annually in June and December. Editorial deadlines for each issue are March 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.

The MLA Committee is still gathering their data to put into a report by Annual. MLA is very interested in issues of subject headings and our thoughts on who uses MLA.

WSS Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect Ginny Daley is in charge of making appointments for 1992-93 committees. If you are interested in being involved in the Section, please give her a call at (919)684-3372.

I have really enjoyed working with all of you and look forward to seeing you all at an excellent Annual Conference in the wonderful city of San Francisco — and at our magnificent social hour with all of our publisher friends.

— Jacquelyn Marie,
WSS Chair

WSS SOCIAL HOUR IN SAN FRANCISCO

The Women's Studies Section is sponsoring its traditional social hour at the ALA Annual Conference in San Francisco. The social hour provides a wonderful opportunity for WSS members and friends to come together informally before the start of the conference to become acquainted, to share ideas, and discuss late-breaking news. It is also a time to meet and welcome new members to the Section. Membership in the Section is not required to attend and you need not make a reservation — just come, and feel free to bring a friend.

The social hour will be held on Friday, June 26, 1992, from 5:00 — 7:00 p.m. We have reserved a large room in one of the ALA conference hotels and will have a cash bar and refreshments. The bad news is that ALA was unable to make a specific room assignment for us before the newsletter went to press. As soon as they have made the assignment, we will communicate it to the Women's Studies community through the

Women's Studies Discussion List (WMST-L), the Feminist Task Force Discussion List (FEMINIST) and other appropriate media. When you see the notice, please spread the word to our friends. If you haven't learned the exact location before you pack your bag and head for the Bay Area, please contact Carol Rudisell, chair of the WSS Communications Committee at carol.rudisell@mvs.udel.edu (e-mail) or call 302-831-2432.

A special thanks to the Feminist Task Force for co-sponsoring this event.

Carol Rudisell,
Chair, Communications Committee

WSS PUBLISHING PROJECTS

Two new WSS publications are now available: Publishing Opportunities for Women's Studies Librarianship and the Women's Studies Section Publication Policies and Procedures Manual.

The first is a ten-page listing of library and Women's Studies periodicals that offer publishing opportunities for articles or bibliographies related to library collections and services in Women's Studies. Citations to articles previously published in each journal are included to provide examples of the types of material accepted. Produced by the WSS Publications Committee, the guide may be obtained from the compiler, Susan Williamson, Annenberg School for Communication, 3620 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19104-6220.

The WSS Publication Policy and Procedures Manual, approved by the WSS Executive Board at the Atlanta Conference, is designed to outline the various policies governing section, division, and association publications and to aid aspiring authors in negotiating the frequently circuitous path between the creation of a work and its publication. It is available on request from Cindy Faries, Chair, WSS Publications Committee,

E108 Pattee Library, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16801; e-mail: csf@psulias.bitnet

The WSS Publications Committee also anticipate future publication of Issues in Women's Studies Librarianship: Faculty and Librarians Frame the Question, an anthology edited by Ellen Broidy (University of California, Irvine) and Lori Goetsch (Michigan State University), currently in progress.

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

Notable Black American Women (Detroit: Gale Research Inc., 1992). Edited by Jessie Carney Smith, this massive reference book contains biographical entries for 500 African-American women, both living and dead. The list of women is impressive and includes well-known names (Sojourner Truth, Audre Lorde, Charlotte Hawkins Brown, Ethel Waters), as well as lesser known women. Entries are often illustrated, include references to other biographical sources, and indicate the location of manuscript/archival collections. There is a helpful index, as well as a list of women by area of endeavor.

Sources on the History of Women's Magazines, 1792-1960: An Annotated Bibliography (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991). Mary Ellen Zuckerman has compiled a useful bibliography focusing on the history of popular American women's magazines. The bibliography is organized into several chapters, which cover general historical information, advertising, portrayal of women in the media, business, specific women's magazines, etc. Also helpful is the list of archives and manuscript collections.

Statistical Record of Women Worldwide (Detroit: Gale Research Inc., 1991). Want to know what French women think about RU486? What mothers fear most for their children? The number of legal abortions worldwide, arranged

by country? This work covers attitudes and opinions, as well as population and vital statistics. Despite the title, much of the information is limited to the U.S. Sources are clearly cited, and there is a good index.

WOMEN'S INTEREST GROUP AT IFLA

The new Women's Interest Group at IFLA had two meetings during the IFLA 1991 Conference in Moscow. The short term objective of the group is to promote the gathering of new information (research) and its dissemination on the role and status of women in librarianship in cooperation with library associations, and, from this, to identify issues where women need assistance within the profession. The group is planning a program focusing on resources for women and women's studies for IFLA's 1992 Conference to be held in New Delhi, India. The program coordinator is Kalpana Dasgupta, Director of National Library, Belvedere, Calcutta, India. (From ALA's International Round Table newsletter, International Leads.)

COST OF WOMEN'S STUDIES MATERIALS

The Collection Development and Bibliography Committee is collecting data on average prices for women's studies materials. The Committee seeks information on average prices for both monographs and serials for the last three years (including 1991-92). Librarians who can share average price data for any of these years are asked to send the data, along with a brief description of how the figures were computed, to Sally Wilson Weimer, UCSB Library, Reference Department, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA 93106

**FEMINIST TASK FORCE ANNUAL
PROGRAM:
"SEX, SOCIETY, AND
CENSORSHIP OF WOMEN"**

WSS member Sarah Pritchard will moderate the Feminist Task Force's annual program, co-sponsored by WSS. The featured speaker is Susie Bright, publisher of On Our Backs and author of Susie Sexpert's Lesbian Sex World (Pittsburgh: Cleis Press, 1990). The program is scheduled for Saturday, June 27, 1992, from 8:00 — 10:00 p.m. Check the conference program for location.

**WOMEN'S STUDIES AND
FEMINIST LIBRARIANS
LISTSERVES**

If you have access to electronic mail at home or work, you can sign on at no cost to two relatively new listserves of interest to WSS members: WMST-L, a listserv directed at faculty and students involved in Women's Studies academically, and FEMINIST, a listserv sponsored by ALA's Feminist Task Force.

To sign on, at the send mail prompt, type in the message "Mail (address of listserv)". For WMST-L the address is LISTSSSERV@UMDD (Bitnet) or LISTSERV@UMDD.UMD.EDU (Internet). For FEMINIST the address is LISTSERV@MITVMA (Bitnet) or LISTSERV@MITVMA.MIT.EDU (Internet). The message is SUBSCRIBE (name of listserv) (your full name). For example, "SUBSCRIBE WMST-L Jane Doe".

**WSS CO-SPONSORS LRRT'S
PROGRAM: "WHOSE SCIENCE?
WHOSE KNOWLEDGE? THINKING
ABOUT WOMEN'S LIVES**

The Women's Studies Section is a co-sponsor of the Library Research Round Table's 1992 Annual Program, featuring Sandra Harding, Professor of Philosophy at the University of

Delaware. Panel members include Jane Robbins, David Penniman, and Patricia Berger. The program is scheduled for Saturday, June 27, 1992, from 2:00 — 4:00 p.m. Check the conference program for location.

**UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND
CALLS FOR PAPERS**

The University of Kentucky has moved its annual Women Writers Conference from the spring to the fall. This year the 14th annual conference will be held October 28-31, 1992. At this time writers who have agreed to appear at the conference include Jayne Anne Phillips, author of Machine Dreams and Black Tickets; J. California Cooper, whose novel, Family, tells the story of the post-Civil War experiences of a black family through the voices of its women; and Cynthia Kadohata, a young Asian-American novelist whose novel, The Floating World, shares the lives of a multi-generational family of migrant farm workers. The conference will also offer workshops on Saturday afternoon, October 31, in poetry, short fiction, children's literature, essays and play writing. All workshops will be lead by women writers and require pre-registration and the submission of manuscripts. For more information about the conference and about the conference and how to register please write Betty Gabehart, Director, Women Writers Conference, 106 Frazee Hall, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky 40506-0031.

The 1992 North Central Women's Studies Conference will also be held at the University of Kentucky October 30-31, 1992. The conference has been designed to coincide with part of the Women Writers Conference. The conference theme is "Many Voices, Many Visions, Many Women's Lives." Featured speakers at the Women Writers Conference will be also featured at this conference, along with papers, panels and other presentations. A concert by Lexington's all-woman Reel World String Band

will also be presented. Proposals for individual papers, panels and complete sessions, as well as performance and video presentations are invited in all areas of Women's Studies. Abstracts for papers and presentations should be approximately 200 words, typed and double-spaced, and should be accompanied by the presenter's vita. All materials should be sent to Program Committee, NCWSA Conference, Women's Studies Department, 241 Patterson Office Tower, University of

EDITOR'S NOTES

Thank you to everyone who submitted material for this newsletter. As always, we are eager to hear your thoughts and suggestions. Please send any news or announcements that you would like to see in future newsletters to Wendy Thomas, Public Service Librarian, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, 10 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Bonnie Cox, Editor, 1991-92
Wendy Thomas, Asst. Editor, 1991-92

ACRL WOMEN'S STUDIES SECTION ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

Please note that meeting times are tentative as we go to press. Check conference program for locations and possible time changes

Friday, June 26

2:00-4:00 p.m.	Executive Committee
5:00-7:00 p.m.	Social Hour

Saturday, June 27

9:30-11:00 a.m.	New Orleans 1993 Program Committee
9:30-11:00 a.m.	1993 Nominating Committee
9:30-11:00 a.m.	Technical Services Committee
2:00-4:00 p.m.	Publications Committee
2:00-4:00 p.m.	Communications Committee
2:00-4:00 p.m.	Collection Development Committee

Sunday, June 28

9:00-11:00 a.m.	Membership Meeting
2:00-4:00 p.m.	Collection Development Committee
2:00-4:00 p.m.	Technical Services Committee
2:00-4:00 p.m.	Communications Committee
2:00-4:00 p.m.	Publications Committee

Monday, June 29

9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	WSS PROGRAM: IS THE "POLITICAL CORRECTNESS" BACKLASH CONTROLLING WOMEN'S RIGHT TO KNOW? INFORMATION SUPPRESSION IN THE INFORMATION AGE
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Tuesday, June 30

9:00-11:00 a.m.	Executive Committee
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