

## **The Society: Minutes of the Women's Caucus Meeting**

### **1999 HSS Annual Meeting, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

Andrea Rusnock, the co-chair of the caucus from 1997-1999 chaired the meeting. Abha Sur, the co-chair (1998-2000) assisted and acted as official secretary. The meeting opened, as has become our tradition, with all participants introducing themselves briefly. A sign-in sheet was circulated for purposes of future contact. Approximately 35 people were in attendance.

First order of business was the announcement of the WC-sponsored and other sessions on gender in the history of science at the 1999 HSS annual meeting in Pittsburgh. This year the WC sponsored one session: "Gender and Science: Transnational and Cross-cultural Perspectives." In addition there was another session: "Victorian Women Bridging Art and Science." The co-chairs reminded everyone present that WC would continue the tradition of organizing sessions on topics of women, gender and science and encouraged members to approach co-chairs with ideas and proposals.

Andrea Rusnock announced that the Women/Gender and the History of Science syllabus sampler has been published and was available at the Pittsburgh meeting. The listed price of the sampler is \$8, but it was available at the special price (\$5) at the Women's Caucus meeting.

Amy Bix reported on the job survey. Bix stated that the HSS office had been very helpful as usual and that the results of the survey were published in the October HSS Newsletter. The survey returns indicated that of thirty-four permanent and temporary positions thirteen (40.6% of the posts) went to women candidates. There was some discussion about permanent versus temporary jobs. It was noted that 60% of temporary positions in category 1 (History (and/or Philosophy) of Science, Technology, and/or Medicine) went to women as compared to only 36.4% of the permanent positions. The issue of income brackets in tracking was also discussed briefly and it was noted that while AHA included this information HSS did not. There was general agreement about the importance of tracking and Bix's hard work on the job survey was roundly appreciated.

Pamela Mack reported that everyone who attended the last meeting of the women's caucus was put on a listserv managed by her. The listserv is functioning quite well in disseminating relevant information and there was talk of adding an international women group. It was noted that the conference on gender and science last September in Cambridge, England had brought together some fifty participants of which, roughly 15-20 were from the U.S. It was felt that e-mail exchange between international women scholars would be most useful. Mack offered to update the listserve and to look into setting up a link from the HSS website. She also noted that to get on or off the list people have to contact her directly as of now.

Next we turned to the History of Women in Science Prize. We agreed that the amount of the prize be doubled which meant raising the endowment to \$50,000. The initial endowment for the prize was raised by the efforts of the HSS women. It was decided to approach both corporations and individuals for donations to the HSS earmarked for the Women's prize. Sally Kohlstedt agreed to look into corporate donations by being our representative on the HSS Development Committee while Pam Mack offered to

coordinate individual donations. The caucus felt strongly that the prize remains as Women's prize and not be given a corporate name.

Rima Apple announced the forthcoming conference "Writing the Past, Claiming the Future: Women and Gender in Science, Medicine, and Technology" to be held in St. Louis on October 12-15, 2000. The proposals for panels and papers are due January 1, 2000.

The next item on the agenda was the election of next year's co-chair. Amy Bix was elected to the position after Joy Harvey withdrew her candidacy.

The meeting was then opened for general discussion. The issue of inadequate representation of women at the executive level of the HSS was revisited. Lynn Nyhart felt that we had to be aware of the nominating process. It seems about 30 to 40 signatures accompany the nomination and the slate is released in the January newsletter. She said we needed to be proactive in communicating to the nominating committee names of potential candidates. With regard to other activities WC might take up in the future advertisement of the Women/Gender and the History of Science syllabus sampler took priority and a number of concrete suggestions were made. Some of the organizations mentioned included MLA (Women's Medical Association) American Women in Science, H-net, Association for Women in Mathematics, Women's Colleges, CCWHP, WEPAM (an advocacy group for women), women botanists, and Ecological Society. Andrea Rusnock offered to follow up the suggestion that a written explanation (3-4 paragraphs) of the syllabus sampler be sent to these organizations. It was also suggested that an on-line ordering form for the syllabus be made available. We were pleased to note that the copies of syllabus sampler that Melissa Oliver brought to the Pittsburgh meeting was sold out by the end of our meeting!

The meeting closed with the co-chairs extending a formal thank-you to Melissa Oliver and Jay Malone for all their help in handling WC business through the Executive Office