

ASA Women's Caucus Co-Convenors' Report

By

ASA Women's Caucus Co-Convenors

Nwando Achebe (Michigan State University: achebe@msu.edu and

Judith Van Allen (Cornell University: jv43@cornell.edu)

We extend warm greetings to the members of the ASA Women's Caucus. This past year has been a busy year of reorganization, and we have much to report on. The Women's Caucus events at the 2015 ASA Annual Meeting in San Diego are now set. We continue to enjoy the support and cooperation of Suzanne Baazet, ASA Executive Director, and Kathryn Salucka, ASA Program Manager, and very much look forward to further collaboration with them to promote the Women's Caucus. Our revised by-laws (both the WC by-laws and the Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize by-laws) have been passed and will be posted on the Women's Caucus webpage, which we continue to expand (<http://asawomenscaucus.matrix.msu.edu/>). With the help of one of our membership secretaries and our student representative (see more about them below) we are happy to report that we have launched a Facebook page, (see <https://www.facebook.com/ASAwomenscaucus>), which we will use in tandem with our Women's Caucus website. We are also happy to report that our Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize committee is busy evaluating submissions for our 2015 scholarly prize.

As part of our reorganization, we welcomed a new and dynamic treasurer, Alicia C. Decker, who joins us from Pennsylvania State University. The Women's Caucus continues our commitment to expanding membership. We hope that if you are not already a member, you will consider joining us and supporting our programs. To this end, we have created the new office of Membership Secretary and are happy to introduce our new co-membership secretaries, Andrea Arrington (Indiana State University) and Rachel Jean-Baptiste (University of California, Davis). We also introduced a new position of Graduate Student Representative on the Steering Committee, to help bolster our graduate student numbers and serve as a liaison. Tara Reyelts (Michigan State University) was elected to that position.

We are pleased to announce and welcome the members of our steering committee. In future SC members will be elected for three-year terms, but at the business meeting in 2014 we elected members to variable terms in order to create future staggered terms: Claire Robertson (Ohio State), Joyce Kirk (University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee) and Lynda Day (CUNY, Brooklyn) for one-year terms; Ousseina Alidou (Rutgers), Tara Reyelts (MSU), and Wangui Wagoro (Independent Scholar) for two-year terms; and Emily Burrill (UNC, Chapel Hill), Corrie Decker (UC Davis), and Bridget Teboh (UMass) for three-year terms.

We also welcome as members of our newly created Advisory Committee, Judith Byfield (Cornell), Maria Cattell (The Field Museum of Natural History), Gracia Clark (Indiana), Stanlie James (Arizona State), Anthonia Kalu (Ohio State), Mary Osirim (Bryn Mawr), Kathleen Sheldon (UCLA), and Betty Wambui (SUNY Oneonta).

Women's Caucus Luncheon -- 2014

As those of you who were in attendance know, the 2014 Women's Caucus Lecture was given by **Micere M. Githae Mũgo**, Meredith Professor for Teaching Excellence, and Professor of African American Studies at Syracuse University. She is a recipient of numerous awards, including the Distinguished Africanist Award from the New York African Studies Association for her contribution to scholarship. In November 2002, The East African Standard Century listed her among "The Top 100: They Influenced Kenya Most During the 20th Century". She gave an illuminating, engaging and moving talk on *Women Embracing Creativity and Utu as Tools to Combat Violence and Find Healing*. Professor Micere Mũgo's speech can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3YJbigMjc0>. A complete list of past speakers can be found on our website.

The 2014 **Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize**, for a creative work, was awarded to Reneilwe Malatji for *Love Interrupted* (Modjaji Books, 2012). The book award committee was chaired by Anthonia Kalu (Ohio State), and included, Fahamisha Brown (Metropolitan College of New York), and Joyce Dixon-Fyle (DePauw). We thank them all for their service, and share the citation for the award: "In recognition of her accomplishment in her first published collection of short stories, *Love Interrupted* (Modjaji Books, 2012). Ms. Malatji's light narrative style and understated humor portrays the dignity and inner strength that South African women exhibit as they continue to take charge of their personal, public and professional lives. Her approach to narrating the extraordinary lives of ordinary South African women offers unique and new directions and insights for the African scholar of Women's Studies, Family Studies, gender politics and race in Africa."

The 2014 book prize committee also recommended Philo Ikonya for an honorary mention. Here is her citation: "In recognition of her accomplishment in her published novel, *Still Sings the Nightbird* (Langaa Publishing CIG, 2013). In this experimental novel, Ikonya's poetic prose presents some haunting characters as she compares and links the rape of Kabi, the young female protagonist with that of her homeland, Kenya. However, human complicity to unending sufferings both endure do not deter Kabi's and Kenya's ability to hope for freedom from the complexities of the vicissitudes of blind and cruel injustices. The overall impression of Ikonya's *Nightbird* lingers as she guides readers' imaginations through the frustrations of Kenya's efforts to achieve the new and 'modern ways' ushered in by a bleak season of impoverishment."

We are also happy to report that we sent out winners' certificates to past winners of the Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize who had not previously received them.

The scholarly books committee is currently considering books for the **Aidoo-Snyder 2015 Book Prize**. We wish to thank committee members Heidi Nast, chair, (Depaul), Mojubalu Okome (CUNY Brooklyn), and Karen Flint (University of North Carolina, Charlotte), for their willingness to take on this responsibility.

Womens' Caucus Luncheon - 2015

For the 2015 annual meeting, we are pleased to welcome as the Women's Caucus Luncheon speaker **Margaret "Peg" Snyder**, who will speak on *Four Decisive Decades: The Birth and Growth of a Global Women's Movement*. Her lecture will mark the fortieth anniversary of the first global women's conference in Mexico City and the subsequent founding of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), as well as the formal founding of the African Studies Association's Women's Caucus. Margaret "Peg" Snyder is founding director of UNIFEM, now expanded as UN Women. She served as director from 1978-89. Her many contributions to development work include co-founding the UNECA African Centre for Women and serving as its director from 1971 to 1978, co-founding the Sirleaf Market Women's Fund, and serving as treasurer of the Green Belt Movement International. After UN retirement she was a Visiting Fellow at Princeton University (1992-93) and a Fulbright scholar in Women and Gender Studies at Makerere University (1995-96). Her authored or co-authored books include *Transforming Development: Women, Poverty and Politics* (a history of UNIFEM), *African Women and Development: A History*, and *Above the Odds: a Decade of Change for Ugandan Women Entrepreneurs*. Her PhD is from the University of Dar es Salaam. Peg Snyder has been a long-time supporter of the Women's Caucus, and the Women's Caucus' annual Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize is co-named in her honor.

We will have a **box lunch** as we have done in recent years because of the prohibitive hotel prices for a sit-down lunch. But box lunch prices also keep going up and up. After much negotiation and the aid of Kathryn Salucka, we were able to arrange a box lunch for \$32. As in the last few years, individuals will be able to attend the lecture without purchasing a lunch, but the luncheon is a fundraiser for the Women's Caucus, so we hope that you will be able to support us by purchasing a luncheon ticket and by encouraging your colleagues and graduate students to attend as well. Please remember to purchase your tickets ahead of time, as there will only be a limited opportunity to purchase tickets on-site because the hotel sets an early deadline for our ordering lunches. You can purchase tickets online here: <http://www.africanstudies.org/annual-meetings/annual-meeting-forms/2015-women-s-caucus-luncheon>. We will again be able to subsidize 10 graduate student lunches, at \$15 on a first-come, first-serve basis for students who purchase luncheon tickets at the Women's Caucus table on site. We will also have a raffle at the luncheon. Tickets for that will be available on site and prizes will be on display. Please remember that tickets on site and raffle tickets, as well as goods from the Marketplace, can only be purchased by check or cash.

Board-Sponsored Women's Caucus 2015 panel

We have organized our first board-sponsored WC panel, a roundtable on "The History of Women in the ASA." It will be chaired by the WC Co-Convenors and will include reflections on their experiences in the ASA and the changing role and influence of women by former and future women ASA presidents and by women leaders in the WC, including Akosua Adomako Ampofo, Iris Berger, Judith Byfield, Dorothy L. Hodgson, Gwendolyn Mikell, Mary Osirim and Claire Robertson. Please

join us and contribute your voices to the collective history of women in the ASA and in the Women's Caucus.

Women's Caucus 2015 sponsored panels

Alicia C. Decker and Andrea Arrington, working in cooperation with the Co-Convenors, organized three excellent Women's Caucus-sponsored panels, on topics chosen at the 2014 WC business meeting. One, as specified in ASA rules, was exempt from the regular review process, and this year, through the facilitation of Judith Van Allen, who is a board member of the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars, we are co-sponsoring a panel with ACAS for the first time, a panel that was submitted as their exempt panel. All the Women's Caucus panels offer exciting presentations by a mix of older and younger scholars and we urge you to attend and bring your colleagues and graduate students.

Two panels on gender and militarism were organized by Alicia Decker:
Gender, Militarism, and the African State, Part I (co-sponsored by the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars)

Chair: Alicia C. Decker (The Pennsylvania State University)

Discussant: Andrea Arrington (North Carolina School of Science and Math)
Amina Mama (University of California, Davis), "Terror from the Margins: Gender Politics and Global Militarism."

Olu Awofeso and Damilola T. Agbalajobi (Obafemi Awolowo University),
"Gender, the Easily Vulnerable, and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Case of Boko Haram."
Leslie Hill (Bates College), "Enhancing Security or Securing Militarism? Gendering State and Society via AFRICOM."

Nada Ali (University of Massachusetts, Boston), "Engendering 'Kleptocracy': Gender, Militarization, and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration in South Sudan."

Gender, Militarism, and the African State, Part II: Historical Perspectives

(Sponsored by the Women's Caucus)

Chair: Judith Van Allen (Cornell University)

Discussant: Jacqueline-Bethel Mougoue (Baylor University)
Rachel Sandwell (University of the Witwatersrand), Violence Against Men/Violence Against Women: Post-Apartheid Accounts of Abuse in the ANC Camps in the 1980s.
Elizabeth Williams (University of Minnesota, Twin Cities), "Eating the Other": Rebel Drag and Pseudo-Gangsters in Kenya's Mau Mau Rebellion.
Selina Makana (University of California, Berkeley), Soldiering Women: Gender and Militarized Armed Struggle in Southern Africa.

Tara Reyelts (Michigan State University), Gendered Motivations of the 1929 Igbo Women's War.

One panel on women and the state was organized by Andrea Arrington:

Is There an African "Post-Sexist" State?: Complicating the Discussion of Representation and Rights (Sponsored by the Women's Caucus)

Chair: Andrea Arrington (Indiana State University)

Judith Van Allen (Cornell University) “Progress” as Provocation? Rights, Representation and Rape in South Africa
Dina Refki (SUNY- Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy) Mapping the Substantive Representation of Women in the Ugandan Parliament
Robtel Neajai Pailey (University of London-SOAS) Patriarchy, Power Distance, and Female Presidency in Liberia
Discussant: Pamela Scully (Emory University)

Graduate Student Travel Grants

We will be awarding two travel grants, each of \$250, to graduate students presenting papers at the 2014 ASA annual meeting. Corrie Decker will be coordinating the award process. She will send an email to WC members about nominating a student, or for graduate students to nominate themselves, and information will also be posted on the WC website.

Other Annual Meeting Women’s Caucus Events

The 2015 Marketplace will again be organized by Claire Robertson, who organized a very successful marketplace last year. She will be contacting people for donations of goods. But please go ahead and contact her (Robertson.8@osu.edu) if you have items and if you can donate African jewelry, clothing, cloth or other items.

We will be holding a “Meet n’ Greet” as part of the Caucus’ business meeting. Information on these meetings will be posted on our website and will be updated as needed, and will be in the Annual Meeting Program.

Membership

In response to discussions at the 2013 Women’s Caucus business meeting and concerns expressed for several years about the need to bring a younger generation of scholars into the caucus and its leadership, we are very pleased to welcome our new Membership Secretaries, Andrea Arrington, and Rachel Jean Baptiste as well as our graduate student steering member, Tara Reyelts. Andrea Arrington and Alicia Decker have already made a significant contribution this year by organizing the WC panels. This is in addition to Andrea Arrington’s and Tara Reyelts’ work on the launch of our Facebook page, soon to be updated.

Alicia Decker, our new treasurer, has worked tirelessly in updating our records, and in conjunction with our new membership secretaries, has been working together to increase membership and maintain membership records as well as the caucus financial accounts. Her spring Treasurer’s Report is attached to this newsletter.

We once again extend our heartfelt thanks to Joyce Kirk, our past Treasurer (who was publicly acknowledged with a thank you statuette at our 2014 WC Luncheon), for working with Alicia in the handover process. We expect that our new treasurer and membership secretaries will continue their active membership recruitment effort, as will Suzanne Baazet and Kathryn Salucka who have pledged to

assist, as we desire, including sending mailings to all ASA members about joining the WC.

We are happy to report that we now have more than 90 members of the Women's Caucus. A special thank you goes out to our lifetime members, Anthonia Kalu (Ohio State University) and Nwando Achebe (Michigan State University).

By-Laws Changes

Voting on the proposed changes in the WC and Book Prize By-Laws concluded August 6, and the proposed changes have been approved. Thank you to all the members who voted—we received votes from 50% of our members, an excellent response rate, especially during the summer. The change in the WC By-Laws to pass and amend by-laws by 2/3 of those voting, with a minimum quorum requirement of 25% of members, and to add a procedure for proposing amendments, was approved by 44 votes to 1. The change in the Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize By-Laws to remove the prohibition on WC officers/Steering Committee members submitting books was approved by 40 votes to four.

Sharing News of Member Publications

We are pleased to announce that we have created a page on our website on which we will be able to post recent publications by members, and we expect to expand our Facebook page for more communication among members as well. We'll send you an email about sending in publication citations, and about the FB page as it progresses.

Incorporation and By-Laws

We continue to explore the possibility of incorporating the Women's Caucus as a not-for-profit organization, in order to allow online membership payments through PayPal and tax-deductible donations and open possibilities for investing our Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize Fund in an interest-producing account. Because of legal restrictions following 9/11, it is not possible for ASA to accept donations or dues for the Women's Caucus and pass them through to us. This will not affect our status as a coordinate organization of the ASA; several other coordinate organizations are incorporated as not-for-profits.

We look forward to seeing you in San Diego at all the WC events!
Nwando Achebe & Judith Van Allen, Co-Convenors

Women's Caucus Steering Committee: Alicia Decker, Treasurer (Penn State), Andrea Arrington (IndianaU) and Rachel Jean-Baptiste (UC Davis), co-Membership Secretaries; Ousseina Alidou (Rutgers), Emily Burrill (UNC, Chapel Hill), Lynda Day (CUNY, Brooklyn), Corrie Decker (UC Davis), Joyce Kirk (University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee), Tara Reyelts (MSU), Claire Robertson (Ohio State), Bridget Teboh (UMass), and Wangui Wagoro (Independent Scholar).

Women's Caucus Advisory Committee: Judith Byfield (Cornell), Maria Cattell (The Field Museum of Natural History), Gracia Clark (Indiana), Stanlie James (Arizona

State), Anthonia Kalu (Ohio State), Mary Osirim (Bryn Mawr), Kathleen Sheldon (UCLA), and Betty Wambui (SUNY, Oneonta).